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CONTENTS

	Page
COMMENTS	397
CARDS ON THE TABLE	399
THE POUND OF FLESH	399
COUNT TWO. By Peter de Mendelssohn	400
A LONDON DIARY. By Critic	401
DUTCH BOURBONS. By J. de Kadt	402
THE NIHILISTS IN LONDON. By Harry Roberts	402
EGYPTIAN BEGGAR. By Terence Tiller	403
A NOTE ON JEAN-PAUL SARTRE. By Vernon Mallinson	403
MATISSE AND PICASSO By Roger Marvell	404
RADIO NOTES. By Edward Sackville West	404
THE MOVIES By William Whitebait	404
NEW MUSIC. By Desmond Shawe-Taylor	405
CORRESPONDENCE From Lionel Fielden; A. P. Ryan; Helen F. Grant; Maung Ohn; A. S. Neill; F. Hickinbotham; Ted Willis; and others.	405
BOOKS IN GENERAL. By Raymond Mortimer	408
REVIEWS:	
Anti-American Propaganda. By J. Wilson	409
Children's Books By Frances Bird	409
More Children's Books. By V. S. Pritchett	411
Pioneer Architect. By Geddes Hyslop	411
New Novels By Henry Reed	412
WEEK-END COMPETITIONS	413

DEFENDING THE LAST DITCH

Belief in miracles is a precarious foundation on which to base political action. If we had any reasonable assurance that the United States would never have another slump, would refrain from trying to export any of the unemployment which her immense productive capacity is apt to create, and could increase her domestic consumption sufficiently without hamstringing the acquisition of surplus value by which her social system is powered—then there might have been some case for the Washington Agreements, beyond our desperate need for hard cash to prevent extreme cuts in our imports of food, materials and capital goods. Elsewhere we analyse the conditions we have signed. It might have been worth our while to accept the loan's onerous financial terms, to break up the economic unity of the Commonwealth, to dismantle our defences against aggressive trade competition from America's big battalions, and to tie ourselves to the obligations of multilateral commerce and free exchanges, if we could rely on an expansion of world trade so great and stable that our own, almost certainly diminished, slice would still be adequate to our needs. As matters stand, our conclusion is that we have been forced into a disastrous bargain. We may avoid a hard period of still more drastic austerity, which the Opposition and its press would doubtless have exploited unscrupulously against the Government; and we shall have a chance to expedite our industrial re-deployment. But, against this, we run grave risk of ultimately being compelled to invoke all the ingenious "escape clauses" in the Agreements and of becoming an insolvent debtor when we shall have forfeited our power of economic independence.

There are degrees even of disaster. The task for the Labour Government is to foresee and forestall, so far as it can, the consequences of the commitments which it has felt compelled, under duress, to assume. There are, as we see the situation, three essential points of policy. First, the dollar credits must not be used for unproductive purposes. We must not use them to pay for the maintenance of armed forces whose size cripples our civilian industries; and we must draw on them most sparingly for imports of extra food and finished consumers' goods. Invoking forthwith the "deficit balance of payments" clause, we must restrict "globally" the import of manufactures likely to come, in practice, from the U.S.A. The dollars must be spent, first and foremost, on raw materials and plant for reconversion. Otherwise the day of reckoning will find us hopelessly unprepared.

Secondly, since everything points to Britain being compelled ultimately to repudiate commitments whose fulfilment U.S. trade policy will make impossible, we must face the probability of a future quarrel with America, and unrestricted commercial warfare. In that event, we shall need to have friends elsewhere. We have been forced, as it is, to jeopardise the interests of the working class in the poorer countries from whom we borrowed during the war. By liquidating part of the blocked sterling balances in the form of "free" currency, instead of exports of British goods planned to assist backward economic development, we condemn India and our Middle East creditors to social stagnation while Packard cars are imported by their rich war-profiteers. But we can at least resist resolutely American demands that we bully our sterling creditors into writing off the bulk of their loans to us. In no circumstances can we afford their ill-will. And, if we are to have any chance of re-erecting successfully our dismantled defences, we must do everything we can, within the hampering limitations now imposed on us, to develop solid commercial relations with the U.S.S.R. and Continental countries not yet imprisoned in the "dollar area." If we endeavour, at America's behest, to try to force a "free market" economy on Eastern European countries, we shall forfeit all chance of durable good relations with Russia.

Finally, and this is the cardinal issue, the Government must recognise that, if the Washington terms are not to involve us in abandoning all hopes of full employment and a planned Socialist economy, Britain's import-export trade must become a comprehensive State monopoly. Only on such conditions can we have any real assurance, under a system of free exchange payments for current transactions, that we can prevent a flight of capital; and, so long as private enterprise in imports exists, every attempt to restrain it from anti-social purchases will lead to American complaints that we are departing from the "non-discriminatory" provisions of the Agreements.

It will be objected that the draft proposals for the regulation of international trade, which we have unaccountably undertaken to support, provide that even State trading agencies must in future be guided by strictly commercial considerations in their behaviour. The U.S.S.R., we suggest, is unlikely to agree to such a clause, without amendment; and, in any case, wording so imprecise would give considerable scope for deliberate management by the State of the direction of its import-export transactions. In the adoption of such mechanism—however unpalatable Congress may find this British corollary to an Agreement otherwise weighted exclusively in America's favour—lies, we believe, the one possibility of defending our economic and political freedom. Even if we can now only be rescued by amendments to the Trade Charter proposed by the Dominions or the U.S.S.R., it is absolutely vital that at the forthcoming Conference the right to enter into reciprocal trade agreements should be established.

Sir Stafford Cripps apparently believes that the Trade Charter is a triumph for British diplomacy because, in return for our promise to open the Empire to American goods in a multilateral system, the Americans pledge themselves to a policy of full employment without detriment to others' interests. No Administration, least of all Mr. Truman's, can change, by a scrap of paper, the laws of the capitalist economics which they champion. Realism should compel the Government to recognise that belief in a permanent U.S. import surplus is Utopian. We must fight in the last ditch to prevent the export to these shores of American unemployment and to insulate ourselves from the same fate as befell

that debt-burdened German Republic which once sought to build its castle on the shifting sand of American finance capital.

Cold Facts

The statistical White Paper issued in connection with the Washington loan negotiations brings out very clearly the extraordinarily difficult position in which Great Britain is placed. Before the war we depended on imports for two-thirds of our food and for most of our raw materials except coal. In 1944 our exports had fallen to less than one-third of their pre-war volume, and for the first three-quarters of 1945 they were at 42 per cent. of the pre-war volume, including exports for relief purposes. In order to pay for imports at the pre-war level, we need to increase our exports by 50 per cent. so as to offset our loss of income from overseas investments; but this figure makes no allowance for repayment of wartime debts, or for increase of population, or for the import content of the additional exports we shall need. The White Paper puts the real need for increased exports at "nearer 75 per cent. than 50 per cent. in excess of the pre-war level," and it seems doubtful whether even this will be enough. Our external liabilities in June 1945 amounted to £3,355 million, of which about half was owing to India, Burma, and the Middle East. Our remaining overseas assets could not be valued, but were estimated as bringing in less than £100 million in income. Our mercantile marine, including tankers, has fallen from 22 to under 16 million tons. We have, or had in October, £450 million in gold and dollar reserves; but in effect we owed this (and vastly more) to our sterling creditors. If we are to restore equilibrium in our balance of payments, we shall need, as a distinguished Liberal economist, Sir Hubert Henderson, has said in *The Times* "every aid which deliberate arrangement and planning can supply."

Crisis in Indonesia

Failure to recognise the Indonesian Republican Government has led step by step to the present crisis in which fighting has now spread over Indonesia, and British and Indian troops are involved in a large-scale military operation. Mr. Sjahrir, the Indonesian Prime Minister, has asked for a clear-cut statement whether the Conference in Singapore last week-end between the Allied Commanders and Mr. van Mook decided to widen the enforcement of law and order throughout Java even if it meant using all forces at their disposal. "There can hardly be such a thing," he has said, "as a war against the extremists alone. If the British are going to bring more force to start a large-scale action, then all Indonesians will resist them to the best of their ability." Mr. Sjahrir has shown great moderation and willingness to co-operate with the British in their task of rescuing internees and prisoners, and has offered the services of the Indonesian Army for the protection of British convoys. His latest statement is thus a warning to the world of large-scale warfare if a decision has been taken to increase military operations against Indonesians as a people. In the useful Debate, opened by Mr. Driberg on Tuesday, Mr. Noel-Baker suggested that the Dutch and Indonesians "should sit down together to adjust their differences on the basis of concrete proposals from both sides, without any delay. The first essential is that both sides should appoint representatives with full powers who are in no danger of being repudiated." He added that Mr. van Mook was already on his way to the Netherlands to consult the Dutch Government. As far as the Indonesian leaders are concerned, there seems no danger of repudiation, but Mr. van Mook has already been repudiated once by the Dutch Government at a point where his influence was certainly in the direction of negotiations with the Indonesians. The instructions which the Hague has given in the past few months have prevented a settlement to the dispute. A change is therefore needed urgently in Dutch policy; and since it is British military support which alone can give the Dutch the power they require, renewed pressure from London is the key to the situation.

The Indian Outlook

The talks which Lord Wavell and the Governor of Bengal have had with Mr. Gandhi and other Congress leaders may do something to ease the anxious situation in India, though negotiations, in the proper sense of that word, can take place only when the long-drawn-out electoral period ends in April. The prolongation of these elections, first central and then provincial, over nearly five months, has had the unfortunate effect of intensifying mass emotion and delaying constructive action. Indians, meanwhile, are angry over many things—the "Indian National Army" trials, the use of Indian troops in Java, and the slow release of political suspects, of whom 600 are still in detention. But the real cause of the growing bitterness and suspicion is that Indians have no belief that we really mean to cut our way through the tangle of the communal impasse. If Mr. Jinnah, fortified (it may be) by electoral successes, again claims to speak for all the Muslim millions, and refuses any collaboration until his demand for Pakistan is conceded, how shall we proceed? Once again, it may be impossible to form a National Government, and the Muslims will claim not one Constituent Assembly, but two. The difficulty over Pakistan, if it should turn out to be the inevitable solution, is not to concede it in principle but to work it out in detail. Mr. Jinnah's claim to all Assam (a Hindu province), all Bengal, Delhi and the Sikh districts, is impossible. But do the Bengalis wish to be partitioned; and if so, by what process, under what arbiter, is the thing to be done? A solution cannot be improvised; yet, as we view the future, it is probable that the British Government will have to propose one. It has four months before it, but no longer, in which to devise a plan. It cannot again allow such a deadlock as resulted from the Simla Conference to hold up a solution. The States, meantime, while British India votes, are as far as ever from democracy; can a Labour Government be content that the princes should speak for their peoples in the future Constituent Assembly? It is all to the good that a Parliamentary delegation should visit India, but its impressions can be no substitute for planned and decided action.

E.A.M. Policy

When the Sophoulis Government took office, we shared the general hope of an improvement in the Greek situation. Royalist terrorism has been restricted in the chief towns, although the gendarmerie, reorganised by British officers, is not yet numerous enough to control the villages and remote districts. But E.A.M. has now fallen out with the new Cabinet, which it originally supported, since it does not accept the new amnesty proposals as adequate. The Sophoulis Cabinet, while prepared to release political prisoners still held in gaol, said nothing about the many thousands of E.L.A.S. men still on the run. Apparently, quite a number of the Ministers are also criticising the present amnesty on the same grounds as E.A.M., though it is not clear whether, by withdrawing its support, E.A.M. hopes to secure the passage of power into the hands of those elements in the Cabinet which are more sympathetic towards it. If this is the case, it is a gamble which may impede the restoration of normal conditions, for any shift towards E.A.M. at present is sure to be paralysed by the Populists. E.A.M. may feel that a threatened boycott of the election is still the only weapon available to it, but if it has precipitated a new crisis, the consequent confusion may impede the preparation of new registers for an honest election—though E.A.M. alleges that Sophoulis was not willing to prepare radically revised voting lists.

The Docker's Wage

The wages recommendation of the Evers Committee falls a long way short of the dock original demand for a basic rate of twenty-f shillings per day, and is only a shilling per more than the employers' final offer upon wh negotiations broke down. Will it be accep for the time being by the men? If Friday's de gate conference accepts the endorsement of rate by the union leaders, it is unlikely that unofficial strike committee will feel str enough to call another national strike. Evershed recommendation, however, may avert local stoppages. If it is put operation, the guaranteed minimum wage o docker on piece-work will be 104s. 6d. If time-worker puts in a five-and-a-half-day we he will get the same sum: if, as the union s gests, there will be only enough work to pro him with eight half-days, his minimum will under 95s. High though this figure may for a minimum, it is too close to prospect average earnings to please the men. The operat of the new rates will, in any case, have to reviewed along with the proposals for furth decasualisation. It is difficult to see on w basis the Committee arrived at its conclusio Clearly embarrassed by the absence of a gene wages policy, it seems to have sought a fig which would be just high enough to aver further strike whilst sufficiently low to av creating precedents in wage advances wh might be taken up in other industries. would be unwise to be complacent about t stop-gap proposal; the need for a more thorou going investigation of wage-rates and work schemes in the docks still remains.

Hours and Output

Mr. Woodcock, of the Trades Union Congr staff, announced at the week-end that the C gress desires immediate legislation for the int duction of the forty-hour week, but is prepa to see the actual introduction of it made by stag He suggested that, within a year at longest, working week should come down everywh to a maximum of 44 hours, and that the fo hours should become operative on an appoint day—to be fixed presumably in the same way the appointed day under the Education A Mr. Woodcock is not reported as having d cussed the question of overtime; but evident a great deal depends on the extent to wh overtime is to be allowed, either by law or und agreements arrived by at collective bargainin If overtime is unrestricted, the length of t standard working week becomes largely a mat of wages; for it is to be presumed that t Trades Union Congress will stand out for t same wage-rates for the shorter as are now pa for a longer working week. If, however, the are to be strict limitations on overtime, the que tion becomes mainly one of man-power. Gre Britain is going for some time—above all, the plans about the size of the armed forces a not drastically modified—to be very short labour; and a real forty-hour week would impracticable without a great speeding-up the average tempo of work in terms of labo efficiency. Even the 44-hour week would volve a heavy strain in some industries, unl output per man-hour could be substantia increased. What this means is that the questi of working hours can hardly be tackled in isol tion: it involves the entire issue of the collabor tion of the workers in securing the highest possib level of efficiency.

Local Government Boundaries

The regulations issued by the Ministry Health for the guidance of the new Boundar Commissioners give the Commissioners pret nearly a free hand in proposing readjustments Local Government areas within the limits of t Act. The only stated exceptions—and ev these are not absolute—are that they are n

ordinarily to deprive a County Borough of its "county" status if its population exceeds 60,000, and that they are not ordinarily to merge a county of more than 100,000 population in another, except by consent. Subject to these restrictions, the Commissioners are left free, after due local enquiry, to do pretty much as they please. They are instructed to do this, but to ensure "efficient and convenient" units of local government; and in doing so they are given a list of considerations to which they are to pay attention. But this list includes nearly everything, and the items in it are placed in alphabetical order, so that no one consideration is given any decisive priority over another. It is also laid down that "the interests of an urban centre and the surrounding countryside shall not necessarily be regarded either as diverse or as complementary"—so that the Commissioners are left free to experiment with areas made up of both town and country or to extend urban boundaries merely to include built-up areas, actual or prospective, exactly as they may think best in any particular case. In default of any general reorganisation of local government areas, probably that complete freedom to experiment is the best course open.

PARLIAMENT: On the Dotted Line

Wednesday

How remote the boisterous cheers and counter-cheers of last Wednesday seem! That was a real old-fashioned debate, which the House could enjoy—and in which everyone, from the prima donnas to the chorus, could excel because they knew their parts. But the applause of Thursday evening was scarcely over before the Prime Minister's statement on the Washington negotiations made the whole censure debate appear a piece of play-acting. Here, to bedevil the party fun, was the real substance of politics, an historic decision—complex, technical and abstruse—which cut clean across Party divisions and brought every single member right up against an issue of individual conscience. And, as in every issue which really racks the conscience, the choice was not between simple good and simple evil but between subtle mixtures of good and evil, shading off from acceptance of the loan and Bretton Woods (with or without mental reservations) through abstention to a vote against the Labour Government. It says something for the seriousness of this House of Commons, that practically every member this evening is worried and uneasy as he struggles to sort out the tangled skein of his own mind.

Decision has not been made easier by the method of presentation chosen by the Government. Instead of selecting one Minister to explain the pros and cons of the complex terms of the Loan, Bretton Woods and the Trade Agreement, they divided the task between the Chancellor and the President of the Board of Trade. Hugh Dalton argued brutally for the acceptance of a bad bargain, if we want butter on our bread this winter. Those dollars, it was implied, would strengthen our sinews for the struggle with the creditor, which we were too feeble at the moment to begin. Stafford Cripps, whose long speech sounded like the opening of a case before a Chancery judge, gave the impression that he really believed in the possibility of changing the nature of American capitalism by Government agreements. Mr. Boothby did not find it difficult to make the Trade Agreement look silly, but he failed to answer the Chancellor's *Realpolitik*. A brilliant speech; but a shade too slick to convert the unconverted, who were probably more influenced by Oliver Lyttelton. Surprisingly, he mentioned the reasons for Tory abstention far more capably than Sir John Anderson; and was shrewd enough to put in his most deadly argument (a Coalition Government would have obtained better conditions) almost as an afterthought.

On the Government side, Norman Smith's eloquent denunciation of Bretton Woods lacked the political horse-sense of the Tory critics, whereas Mr. Benson made a thoughtful defence of the Government, and received enough applause to make it pretty clear which way the votes will go in to-morrow's division. "When in doubt, be loyal."

PHINEAS

CARDS ON THE TABLE

The wartime agreement of the Big Three was based on the principle that they should respect each other's special zones and consult together at frequent intervals on questions of overlapping interest. Such an agreement, we once suggested, is of a precarious type, resembling rather an understanding between Al Capone and Jack Diamond that each should guard his own sidewalk, but refrain from shooting at street corners when one bodyguard met its rival. At San Francisco the ordinary citizenry were allowed to have some say, but each of the Big Three retained its veto where sovereignty was involved. Since then the Western Powers have advocated that vital decisions should be made by all the United Nations, which, in Russian eyes, looks like a proposal to "gang up" the smaller nations against the U.S.S.R. on the basis of private understandings with America and Britain. At the Foreign Ministers' Conference Russian behaviour in what she regards as her own zone was criticised (often with reason), while American and British conduct in the Far East and Greece was not similarly under fire. Russia's manners became correspondingly awkward, and her suspicions were finally confirmed by American policy over the atomic bomb. On this issue and on others the Big Powers did indeed meet in private—but without the Soviet Union. Clearly the question of the bomb as well as the settlement arising out of the war issues must be decided by agreement between the Big Three who bore the brunt of the fighting, if UNO as a whole is to begin its broader task with any hope of success.

When the Foreign Ministers meet in Moscow, the atomic bomb will only be one item on the agenda. If they examine the facts about Persia, they are likely to find that the accusations made by the Russians and others against the Persian Government are justified, but England and America will presumably be critical of the part that Russia is playing in the separatist movement in Azerbaijan. Since all three Powers want a settlement, a compromise can presumably be reached. The burning issue of European reconstruction and the future of Germany is more difficult, because de Gaulle, who thinks he ought to have been invited to Moscow, will oppose any scheme of German unification on the quite logical ground that it would necessarily decide *de facto* the future status of the Rhine and the Ruhr. The wisest plan would be immediately to put forward a development scheme for the Ruhr for peacetime production on which Britain, America and Russia could agree, and then submit the draft to France, Belgium and Holland.

In the Far East Russia has strictly adhered to the Sino-Russian Pact, and is leaning over backwards in not helping the Chinese Communists. American opinion is sharply divided. Before the atomic bomb suddenly ended the war with Japan, America had been flirting with the idea of using the well-trained Communist armies. Now that America no longer needs them, American capitalism has come down heavily in support of the Kuomintang, though nothing has been done to introduce either efficiency or honesty in Chungking. The U.S.S.R. has here tied its own hands by recognising Chiang Kai-shek's as the only legitimate government in China; and it must be remembered that the Chinese Communists adhere to their repeated declaration that they desire Chinese unity and are prepared, if permitted, to accept Chiang's leadership of a democratic China. Nevertheless, though negotiations continue between Chungking and Yenan, American aeroplanes have been transporting Kuomintang troops to strategic points where they were bound to come into conflict with Communist forces; in many places quislings have been kept in power, even in some cases co-operating with Japanese troops to fight the Chinese Communists.

President Truman is in a difficulty. He appears to have been misled at the outset by General Hurley into believing that the Communists would quickly collapse if America gave limited aid to Chungking. Now rudely disillusioned, he is confronted with the choice of allowing the American army to become deeply involved in an unprofitable war in China, or extracting General Wedemeyer's troops as quickly as possible. Such a war would certainly be unpopular in the United States, which has a special attachment to China, and it is not yet clear what policy General Marshall, who has taken General Hurley's place, will adopt. In spite of her treaty with Chiang Kai-shek, Russia cannot be a disinterested spectator in this Chinese civil war, nor can she view with anything but the gravest suspicion the occupation and fortification of strategic islands all over the Pacific by the American Navy and Air Force. She has been excluded from the Commission controlling Japan, which has apparently become an exclusive sphere of American influence. The American zone seems illimitable; it certainly overlaps into the zones of other Pacific Powers.

The main issue is clear enough. If America and Britain maintain a united front supporting each other in the Pacific, in Indonesia and Malaya, in the Middle East and Europe, while Russia is represented as the only nation which is playing the game of power politics and extending its sphere of influence, then Russia will be forced into a snarling and dangerous isolation. In that case UNO will be dead before it meets. If American cards are on the table as well as Russia's, and there are honest discussions of these issues, Russia may come to the forthcoming conference of the United Nations in a less suspicious and more co-operative spirit.

THE POUND OF FLESH

"Beggars cannot be choosers." That was the one plausible defence made by Mr. Dalton of the financial agreement, with its accompanying commitments, forced on the British negotiators by the United States. The terms of the loan itself are unsatisfactory enough; but they are as nothing to the conditions, covering an extraordinarily wide field, which the prospective debtor has been compelled to accept. In addition to repaying the loan with interest, he is bound down to behave, in matters of international economic policy, in all respects as the creditor wishes him to behave, with no consideration at all for his own economic needs. The debtor—that is, Britain—is bound not only to sign the Bretton Woods Agreement and so give up freedom in the sphere of monetary policy, but also, which is even worse, to underwrite a plan for the future regulation of world trade on lines satisfactory to American exporting and investing interests, but likely to prove intolerable to countries which have suffered heavily, instead of gaining, as a result of the war. The Government expresses its "full agreement on all important points" with the American proposals and promises advocacy to secure their acceptance by the rest of the world.

If the words mean what they say, the British Government is pledged to supporting, jointly with America, a Trade Charter which, if ratified internationally, would commit us, among other things: (1) To promote the elimination of all forms of discriminating treatment in international commerce; (2) to refrain from any Government action designed to discourage the importation or consumption of products of other countries which sign the agreement; (3) to enter into arrangements, even in spite of existing commitments, for the elimination of tariff preferences; (4) to introduce no new preferences in any circumstances; (5) not to maintain

any quantitative restrictions on imports except as an aid to restoring lost equilibrium in our balance of external payments; (6) even in that special case, to allocate quotas among exporting countries on a basis of no discrimination; (7) not to use exchange controls as means of getting round the preceding engagement; (8) if we engage in State trading, not to use it as a means of discrimination between countries in making purchases; (9) not to grant any export subsidies resulting in sales abroad at prices below those charged in the home market; (10) to regulate the dealings of any State trading agencies "solely by commercial considerations, such as price, quality, marketability, transportation and terms of purchase or sale"—or, in other words, to run State agencies in a purely capitalistic way; (11) to place our monetary policies under the supervision of the International Monetary Fund, in accordance with the requirements of the Bretton Woods Agreement.

All these conditions the British Government has endorsed, apparently without any reservation at all—and not merely endorsed but pledged itself to aid the Americans in enforcing upon other countries. Given private enterprise in foreign trade, they would nullify national control over both monetary and commercial relations. The abandonment of imperial preference is a minor matter compared with the complete tying of our hands in respect of any arrangements to buy from countries which are prepared to buy from us, or in whose currencies it is relatively easy for us to find the means of paying.

In comparison with this devastating appeasement of American capitalism, the terms of the Financial Agreement itself are a secondary matter. But they are onerous enough. None of the American credit can be applied to reducing Great Britain's vast sterling obligations to other countries—above all to India. Great Britain is not allowed to borrow from any other country on terms more favourable to the lender than those of the American loan. The sterling area and the dollar pool are to be liquidated entirely, and not even gradually, but within one year. There are to be, from the signing of the agreement, no exchange restrictions on permitted imports from America; and within a year all exchange controls, except over capital amounts, are to be abolished, except any that may be imposed by agreement under the terms of the International Monetary Fund. The British Government is pledged to seek an early settlement of its sterling obligations to other countries and to make any sums paid under such settlements available for purchases in the United States. Finally, there is a provision for waiving of interest, but not of repayment of instalments of the principal of the loan in any year in which it can be shown that over an average of five years Great Britain has not been in a position to pay out of current receipts for imports on the pre-war scale. This provision ignores not only the growth of population since the Thirties, but also the fact that more exports imply more imports, as British exports are made mainly of imported materials.

Can these conditions possibly work? They could only work if (*a*) the whole world recovered its prosperity at the greatest conceivable pace, and (*b*) the Americans, accepting the necessity of a permanent import surplus (with the drastic unilateral tariff reductions thereby involved), enjoyed steady and continuous prosperity without any interruption by economic crises or depression. On any reasonable estimate of probabilities this will not happen. Hence, the only situation in which Great Britain could hope to be able to pay off the American loan would be one in which we were left full freedom to manage our affairs so as to maintain full employment at home and so plan our foreign trade as to buy where we could best afford to pay, as well as keeping our total purchases within our means of payment. Even so, our ability to repay the Americans would be doubtful: deprived of this freedom we are left with no chance at all. Moreover, our signature of the Bretton Woods Agreement will leave us so tied in monetary matters to the United States as to ensure that any American depression must communicate itself to our economy, making nonsense of our full employment aims.

Most Americans are unaware that this is the light in which their Government's horse-trading deal is regarded by most people in Great Britain—even by those who are most pro-American and most anti-Russian. Most Americans probably do not realise at all either the extremity of Great Britain's need, or the extent to which their own ideas about currency and trade rest on circumstances peculiar to America, with its hoard of gold, its strong creditor position, and its immense facilities for dumping its surplus products into any foreign markets that can be laid open to its capitalists. If, as we believe, Britain is forced by this Agreement to choose between abandoning planned prosperity and violating the spirit, while keeping to the letter, of the bond, by taking advantage of its ingenious qualifications and "escape" clauses, we have no doubt which course the British Government must adopt. The world, we would remind Congress, has always respected the Merchant who evaded paying the pound of flesh.

COUNT TWO

THE faces of the twenty men and their behaviour in the dock have ceased to be the subject of general interest in the Nuremberg Courtroom. They have almost become the forgotten men of the trial. Interest and attention have shifted entirely from the accused to the accusation, from the criminals to the crime. The trial has at last raised itself to the level of its true significance. Any country town judge could presumably send these twenty men to the gallows for the atrocities they have committed. But that is not all that is required. What is needed is a grand inquisition into this age and its criminal follies, and a determined attempt to rediscover and restate the basic laws of human conduct before it is too late and the European house finally falls asunder. It is yet possible that we shall get the first step in this direction at Nuremberg.

It may, of course, have been accidental that this change of emphasis made itself felt almost immediately after the British delegation took over the prosecution from the Americans. A fresh wind, a new, even aggressive, tone, became at once noticeable. It is more likely, however, that it was the subject matter of the discussion which made everyone sit up. For we have now reached a crucial point in the proceedings. Count One of the Indictment, which was presented by the Americans, did not satisfy everyone as to the necessity of its inclusion, the cogency of the charge, and the absolute water-tightness of the evidence. The legal mind argued that the charge of Conspiracy was not required to convict these men, who were sufficiently guilty on other counts; that it was a novel kind of charge and insufficiently defined, and that the evidence was patchy. The political mind counter-argued that the charge was genuine enough; that if it was novel, it was also long overdue; and that the evidence, if handled with political knowledge and understanding, would have been amply sufficient. It was the Americans who insisted on its inclusion in the Indictment, and they may have a stiff time ahead of them when the defence goes over to the counter-attack. It remains one of the unsolved mysteries of this trial how Justice Jackson could allow the presentation of the evidence to be placed in the hands of lawyers so utterly unfamiliar with, and apparently uninterested in, the complexities and wider implications of this largely political issue.

Not so with Count Two. Here we were at the heart of the matter. Crimes against the Peace, that is, breach of treaties, violation of agreements, non-observance of neutrality, and the giving of fraudulent assurances, are not a novel charge, although one on which few, if any, effective prosecutions have as yet taken place. The fact that the authorities are asleep or insufficiently equipped to catch the murderer does not entitle him to cut throats at will, and claim immunity when at last the policeman has found his gun and knows how to fire it. It will presumably be on this kind of argument that the British prosecution will base itself when challenged by the defence, later in the proceedings, on specific points like the Appeasement Policy, Munich, and the Naval Agreement. It is well known that both Göring and Ribbentrop intend to make such a challenge. The Tribunal, basing itself on its Charter and Rules of Procedure, would formally be in its right to refuse such challenges as "irrelevant to the case," which indeed they are, in a sense; for the weakness and credulity of the democracies (or, as Sir Hartley Shawcross preferred to call them, "love of peace, lack of preparedness, patience and cowardice") do not render the Nazi crimes a whit less criminal. But it is more likely that Sir Geoffrey Lawrence will, less for political reasons than for reasons of absolute, unimpeachably correct legal procedure, give the defence considerable latitude. In that case some sparks may fly and some interesting things come to light.

The British prosecution chose to take its stand on the Briand-Kellogg Pact of August 27th, 1928, thereby disregarding, more by implication than openly, everything that had gone before, like the League Covenant, the Locarno Treaties or the venerable Hague Convention which has now been quoted so often in Nuremberg that its ghost is beginning to haunt the unending dismal corridors of this large and dingy building. Surprising as the choice of the Treaty of Paris may be, Sir Hartley had little trouble in making out a good case for it. Arguing that "it is fully part of international law as it stands to-day, and has in no way been modified or replaced by the Charter of the United Nations," he showed that he was very clearly bearing in mind the implications which his statement in particular and the "Nuremberg precedent" in general are bound to have on the United Nations security organisation. But he went further than that. "No lawyer of repute, no responsible statesman, no soldier concerned with the legal use of Armed Forces could doubt that with the Pact of Paris on the Statute Book (which was binding in 1939 upon more than sixty nations, including Germany), a war of aggression was contrary to positive International Law. *Nor have the repeated violations of the Pact by the Axis Powers in any way affected its validity.* Let this be firmly and clearly stated. The Pact of Paris is the Law of Nations. The world must enforce it. This Tribunal will enforce it. It is on this Universal Treaty that Count Two is principally based."

It is unlikely that the chief British Prosecutor, in virtually committing the Tribunal to this extent, will not be backed up by the eight just men who sit on the elevated dais below the four victorious flags. In that case we may now say, even in the strictest juridical sense, that we "know where we are." The charge that retroactive law was being applied has been thrown out of court, which is a good thing for all of us, including the German people. The charges under Counts Two and Three, consisting exclusively of War Crimes and Crimes against Humanity, will be easily substantiated with the wealth of documentary evidence at the disposal of the French and Soviet prosecutors. But, horrible as they are, and important as it is that conviction should be obtained on them (the also somewhat "novel" charge of "individual responsibility for acts committed by the State" will here briefly rear its puzzled legal head), they do not affect the real issue at Nuremberg. Nor would this issue be affected if, as is unlikely to happen, the Tribunal should accept the charge on Count One and the evidence for it only partially, and thereby practically invalidate it. The heart of the matter is in Count Two. It is on this count, that it is, in law, the greatest of crimes to plan war, that the British delegation must build an unanswerable case. If it does, clearly, unequivocably, and irrevocably, it will have made Nuremberg worth having and established the most important of all theses.

PETER DE MENDELSSOHN

Nuremberg, December 9th.

A LONDON DIARY

It took Clem Attlee just 35 minutes last Thursday to double his political stature. Before he rose to answer Mr. Churchill, he was reckoned, even by his friends, as a first-rate chairman of Committees but a second-rate parliamentarian, in comparison with Herbert Morrison, Stafford Cripps, Aneurin Bevan—let alone Winston Churchill. Then, in just over half an hour, he disposed of the Leader of the Opposition. It was a repetition on the floor of the House of what had happened last July at the microphone. On both occasions Winston was in his most pugnacious form, with his unique mixture of statesman-like generalities, personal sallies and passionate denunciation of Socialist faction. On both occasions, Clem Attlee wiped the floor with him by not attempting to compete as an orator. He just talked quietly, wittily, and with a sincerity which made Winston's seem in retrospect a staged performance. The ovation he got last Thursday—from his own supporters standing and cheering—must have atoned for many bitter memories. How often has he been told, since he replaced George Lansbury as Leader of the Labour Party, that his personality was a serious obstacle to Socialist victory? He has the pleasure of knowing that his unobstrusive personality—above all his integrity of purpose—has defeated the greatest parliamentarian of our age.

* * *

I am glad to hear that the experiment of sending leading Cabinet Ministers to meet two hundred Labour councillors in private conference at Nottingham was so successful and that similar meetings are to be held at frequent intervals. Such meetings make planned reconstruction possible. After Bevan, Harold Wilson and Ellen Wilkinson had given the delegates really frank accounts of the work of their Departments and told them just how they wished local authorities to fit into the Government's plans, they had to stand up to a barrage of detailed questions and informed criticism. This sort of thing is as useful to a Minister as it is to his audience; it shows him where his policy is likely to run into difficulties and where he can afford to press on more boldly. Above all, it helps to break down parochialism; some local authorities are always suspicious of any increase in central guidance. But Herbert Morrison rightly told the delegates to stand up for their legitimate rights of democratic control—which means continual education of the electorate by local authorities. The more they can be persuaded that the success or failure of Labour's educational or housing programmes rests in their hands, the more initiative and enthusiasm will go into their end of the job. I'm told that Aneurin Bevan convinced many delegates for the first time that he has not only a flair for oratory, but a grasp of administrative detail. Several speakers were astonished to find Bevan showing in his answers to criticism intimate knowledge of the memoranda they had drawn up on their local problems. One criticism of the conference, made to me by a delegate, is worth noting. "It would be better," she said, "if, at the next meeting, we have Bevan, Tomlinson and Silkin together. We could then see how well the planning schemes are being co-ordinated. At this conference, it often wasn't clear which Department is responsible for a particular problem."

* * *

The Fabian audience which listened on Monday night to the address of Hector McNeil (taking Noel Baker's place) was clearly thoroughly aware of the issue about the B.B.C. line towards Spain. Hector McNeil brought the house down by a forthright reply to a question. The Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs repeated in stronger language Ernest Bevin's remarks about detesting the Franco regime, and added that the Government was "impatient" to see a democratic government in its place. In answer to a question, he said that he "whole-heartedly agreed" that the B.B.C. "should be capable of more forceful mirroring of our sentiments towards Spain." We are indeed making progress. I was glad to see there was also vigorous expression of public opinion at a delegate conference on Spain last Saturday. The next step is to make what contacts we can with the new overseas Giral Government, and to back efforts that are being made in France and America to broaden its representative character. Now that we have got a provisional Spanish government and a clear British and French policy of "detestation," it should not be long before we get rid of Franco.

* * *

Balanced judgment about the Soviet Union is rare. The silly idolators are aggravating enough, but they fall far short of the hysteria of the anti-Soviet propagandists who masquerade as champions of European freedom. At one recent meeting, attended largely by émigré Poles, the atmosphere was about as reasonable and peaceful as a meeting organised by those who now stand in the dock at Nuremberg. It so happened that among the few sober and English members of the audience was Ralph Parker of *The Times*. One speaker attacked the U.S.S.R. for allowing *British Ally* newsprint for only 50,000 copies. Parker remarked to a friend, as they were going out, that it was a pity that in the interests of accuracy the speaker had not added that each copy of the paper is read by fifteen people—which happens to be the officially acknowledged fact. A member of the audience who had overheard the remark, turned on Parker with a snarl and said "If you talk like that you ought to go and live in Russia." Parker replied that as a matter of fact he did live in Russia. Nothing daunted, his questioner asked: "Are you British?" Parker said he was. "Naturalised, I suppose," said this curious specimen of British patriotism gone mad.

* * *

I can never again hold up my head in an argument with an American about the vulgarisation of art. For American commercialism never sank deeper than the exhibition of Epstein's "Jacob Wrestling with the Angel," now showing in Oxford Street. I thought the newspaper reports must exaggerate until I visited the outrage myself. I did the thing properly. I even paid twopence for the peep-show of the Siamese twins, "both naked." (Nothing could be less exciting than this pathetic and ugly little object.) I tried to look at Epstein's massive work in alabaster. It was not easy; the gramophone continuously blares out its assurance that this is something better than Barnum and Bailey; the dreary nudes designed to lure indifferent spectators and a dozen other vulgarities intrude themselves at every angle. And there, in this atmosphere of degradation, stands this most moving work by our first sculptor. What sort of nation is it that permits this desecration? No one would wish, if it were possible, to invoke the law or to set up a censorship of such shows. What we have to repent and amend is that no public gallery bought this work when it was first exhibited. But is there no one generous enough to rescue it now? For even in these surroundings, its force and its emotional mastery can still overwhelm the spectator who knows how to concentrate.

* * *

Why was it that after the apocalyptic days of 1940 so many motorists stopped giving people lifts on the road? To do so, is the cheapest form of friendly service. Yet motorists who I'm sure are decent enough in other matters cause bitter resentment by refusing to pick people up even on country roads where buses are rare and crowded. The point was rubbed into me last week-end when my aged car, uncared for throughout the war, let me down at last, and I found myself with a long stretch of road in front of me and a large parcel to carry. On this same stretch of road I have given lifts to several hundreds of people during the war. We seldom go shopping without taking village housewives with us, and it has never occurred to me that one could pass Service men and women or civilian pedestrians without giving them a lift if they wanted it. I've made lots of pleasant acquaintances that way. Sometimes, the lift, which cost me nothing, has made a world of difference to tired people coming home from work or to men and women with forty-eight hours' leave. To refuse would have felt like not sharing a meal with someone who is hungry. As I walked home with my parcel, I just could not understand why the cars swept on, regardless of my hail. I just don't get it.

* * *

Would some kind soul tell me what to do about a very well-established bed of ground elder? The yellow roots of nettles can be dug out with persistence and a spade; creeping buttercup, which also spawns and crawls subterraneously, gives in to a campaign of pulling and cutting. But ground elder? How find all its multitudinous rootlets? A gardening friend told me that she tried poisoning a wide area of ground elder and after six months planted more desirable seedlings. She declares that only the ground elder came up—and in greater strength and profusion than ever. If any hero knows a remedy I'd be glad to know of it. But if the remedy is to dig the soil, eliminating every scrap of root by means of a fine sieve, and then repeat the process yearly, then please don't waste a stamp. I know that one.

* * *

During the war I came in contact, through a friend's wife, with an admirable scheme promoted by the W.V.S. in many districts to overcome the shortage of children's clothing—not to mention coupons. Mothers of families brought their offspring's out-grown clothes to depots where they were "valued" and paid for, not in cash but in points. The points could then be "spent" on clothes (duly washed or dry-cleaned) which the depot had at its disposal. Thus not merely did family budgets benefit, but the scheme stopped waste. Clothes which had become too small before they were worn out found a welcome instead of being bundled into a lumber-room. If the W.V.S. ever discontinue their clothing exchanges I hope the scheme will be adopted, particularly in country districts, by local authorities.

* * *

A correspondent contributes the following conversation, overheard in Charing Cross Road. Two American G.I.s outside a bookshop. One picks up a copy of *Burnt Norton* and reads aloud to his companion:

Time present and time past
Are both perhaps present in time future,
And time future contained in time past.

The Second: "Say, what is this guy, a watchmaker?"

The First: "You oughter know; T. S. Eliot is one of the most brilliant men in Britain."

The Second: "Sure, sure, he ain't got no competition."

CRITIC

THIS ENGLAND

A 5/- prize for the first entry in this column goes to L. M. Shirlaw.

Paste entries on postcard or slip of paper and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

A Labour Government gets itself elected with an overwhelming majority. During the last few months I have come into contact with hundreds of people and so far I have not met one who voted for them.

Despite this Socialist Utopia I still cannot purchase a pair of braces with elastic!—Letter in *Sunday Express*.

Many did not want to return to the South. On the railway station platform landladies and their departing guests—they had been together during war years—wept on each other's shoulders.—Report in *News Chronicle*.

British officer needs personal ballroom dancing lessons. Big feet but keen. Pay reasonable fees or could offer tuition Urdu or Chaucer *quid pro quo*. —Advt. in *Statesman*, New Delhi.

DUTCH BOURBONS

[This article comes from a Dutch Socialist now in Batavia. He was interned in Java during the Japanese Occupation.]

At last, nearly three months after the Japanese surrender, the Dutch have issued an official statement of policy towards Indonesia. But you had better not tell the average Dutchman here that his Government is rather late, and you positively should not make such a remark to one of the hundreds of Dutch functionaries who throng here trying to get good jobs—not easy to secure—since Indonesians now have to be given their share and new people from Australia and Holland have already received appointments. Nor should you talk in such a way to the real rulers of the Dutch East Indies, the big business men, who intend to continue their rule, and simply declare that there should have been no "statement" to the natives until "authority had been restored" in the firmest way.

In their heart none of these colonial and would-be colonial Dutch approve of Mr. van Mook's policy, or of the policy of the Government in Holland, or even of the very vague promises made by the Dutch Government in exile and in Queen Wilhelmina's speech of December, 1942. All this is only weakness in their view, humanitarian humbug, or, as the jargon used here runs, "ethical foolishness." Everything short of naked force was called "ethical" by the colonial Dutch before they were put into the camps by the Japanese. And the majority of my fellow-prisoners during these years of hardship not only were far more anti-Indonesian than anti-Japanese, but they were resolved that there should be no "ethical" nonsense about their policy when they came back in Government again.

They did not feel that a new period in world-history should really begin at last, and that world peace is possible only when colonial problems are solved. Nor do they agree that solving these problems means that all subjected peoples should become independent and self-governing. And even when they agree to this theoretically, they think that practically the only sound method is that of going very slow, of taking no risks where their own interests are concerned, and of only granting reforms when their interests have been secured beforehand. The phrases these people use about complete equality, education for independence, and "our task to secure the happiness of the people" are only cant.

To-day when all non-Dutch people see that Indonesia must really have a "new deal," the statement issued is still in the old spirit. Yet Mr. van Mook and Mr. Van der Plas (the man most hated by the colonial diehards, because they know he has a sincere love for the Indonesian people) have at least understood enough to know that a policy of force can come to nothing, and that therefore talks with the Indonesian leaders should be held at once. But if one wants to talk with the leaders of a movement, one should leave it to this movement to appoint its delegates, and one should not refuse to talk to its leaders because there is quite a lot to be said against them. It is the Government at The Hague that still clings to the idea that it can dictate its terms.

After liberation the Dutch Government wanted to appoint a puppet *Volksraad* to nominate delegates to the Imperial Conference which was to advise the Dutch Government on the new statute granted to Indonesia. In the same way it hoped to dictate to the Nationalists who should represent them at a round-table conference. It is no longer useful to recount the story of the Dutch refusal to meet Soekarno, because Mr. van Mook did meet him in the end, in spite of his Government's disapproval, and Mr. Soekarno ceased to be the Indonesian leader, not because he was displeasing to the Dutch Government, but because the Indonesians themselves did not approve of his "Japanese" period.

After all this loss of time, Mr. van Mook's statement of policy, which is only less vague than the Queen's speech, has been allowed to appear. It shows the Dutch are still unable to make a generous offer, to do business on a big scale. They still behave like small shopkeepers. Their only real offer to the Indonesians is a "substantial majority" in the *Volksraad*. But the *Volksraad* is to have no power; the power is to remain with the Dutch Governor-General. The Cabinet are responsible to him and not to the *Volksraad*. The Indonesians will be able to mutter in the *Volksraad* and perhaps, if a free press is permitted, outside it, but the Government will have the army at its disposal as well as the whole apparatus of State. The *Volksraad* will be a Duma and not a Parliament.

Even before Mr. van Mook's statement the Indonesian Government published a full account of its own policy. It may now be disclosed that the man who drafted it was Mr. Sjahrir, who was then Chairman of the Indonesian Executive Committee, and who became afterwards the leader of the present Cabinet. This statement has therefore gained in importance. It makes it clear that though the Indonesians want complete independence, they do not ask for an isolated or autarchic State, and understand that without foreign aid they are doomed to remain without wealth, technical development or the fruits of Western civilisation. They want to develop both their agriculture and industry, and know this means loans, credits, foreign advice, technicians, doctors and so forth. They know that to have these they must have law and order and that the anti-foreign prejudices now fostered by extremists must have disappeared. They point out that, owing to their tradition and special knowledge of the East Indies, the Dutch must inevitably have a predominant place, which is possible in their view only if Dutch political domination ends.

Though most of the leaders of the Nationalist movement are Socialists, they fully understand that the Indonesians must have a long period in which capitalist enterprises must not only be tolerated but encouraged, in which capitalists are allowed to live in Java and have decent profits without more than normal risks. The question now is whether this reasonable policy can be carried out by the statesmen who designed it. Can Sjahrir and Sjarifoedin make a stand both against the Dutch and against the Nationalists? Their position is difficult. The extremists have involved the Indonesians in a struggle with the Allied forces. Sourabaya has been the scene of bombing and fighting. No use now to ask if this could have been avoided. The emotions of the Indonesians have already been aroused; terrorists have become heroes and martyrs, the war against England a holy war, and to many, an appeal to reason an act of treason. An increasing number of Nationalists oppose all discussion with the Dutch or British.

In every revolution—and this is a national revolution—young fools play an important part. They often achieve what cautious men cannot, but they achieve it only if real leaders and strong organisations make use of their enthusiasm and guide it out of dangerous channels. Indonesian youth has not yet found a leader. Dr. Soetomo, the Sourabaya leader, may turn out to be a statesman, but so far he has only shown the qualities of a fanatic. The Socialist and Communist parties are newly formed, while the trade unions appear as yet to have no political direction.

A few weeks ago all the sane and reasonable elements in Indonesia were increasingly uniting round Mr. Sjahrir and Mr. Sjarifoedin. Now the tide is turning against them. But if they can hold on for a short time and build a central organisation, they can regain their influence with the mass of common people who only long for order and a chance to go back to work. Unfortunately, their efforts to achieve unity come less into the limelight than the shooting and looting. Newspaper men know nothing of the plains of Northern Java, where partisans of Mr. Sjahrir have organised and armed peasants against the terrorists. In these areas the organised peasants have disarmed and put to death looters, restored order and are again tilling the soil. They are collecting and distributing food on a fa system, and banishing usurers and corru officials. It is doubtful if they can prevent th food scarcity and even famine in the town which is the natural result of the absence of strong central authority. If there is hunger, will no doubt be used as propaganda against th Government, which needs time and peace re-establish itself. The danger is that th combined attacks of the Dutch, British and th terrorists may create chaos.

Chaos is the only alternative to the prese Government. Of course the British can conqu Java and hand it back to the Dutch. But neith the British people nor the Labour Governme which represents them will for a mome tolerate such a crime against liberty, if th understand that Indonesia now has an hone government which should be given a fair chanc

The Dutch should be urged to come forwa with a serious proposal. They should first acce the Indonesian right to independence, and th grant as a step towards it full Dominion Statu which must include the right to secede from th Dutch Empire after a stipulated period, if th Indonesians desire it. Every day by which suc a statement is delayed diminishes the possibili of winning the Indonesian Nationalists to th idea of federation with the Kingdom of th Netherlands, or even to a treaty of close co operation.

The Dutch Bourbons seem to have learne nothing from history. Since Holland is a const tutional monarchy it seems unfair to regard th Queen as in any way responsible for what i happening. It is the Dutch politicians who ar dragging the Queen into politics, and especiall into those of Indonesia. One cannot hel remembering how Dutch obstinacy led to th loss of Belgium and the part played by the Hous of Orange in this story. It is time for the Dutc to realise that Bourbonism will also lead to th end of their domination of Indonesia and, quit unnecessarily, to the loss of Indonesian friend ship. It is not only as a Socialist, but as a Dutc patriot that I am now writing. I want to war Holland against a fatal policy.

J. DE KADT

THE NIHILISTS IN LONDON

My first contact with the Nihilists who had escaped from Siberia to this country was in 188 when Stepniak's *The Career of a Nihilist* was published by Walter Scott. Although I was only eighteen years of age, I soon found myself on the committee of the organisation responsible for the journal *Free Russia*. During my student years in London I lived in lodgings (two small furnished rooms) between Maida Vale and Brondesbury and I used to lend my sitting-room as a meeting-place to the Executive of the Nihilist Group in London. There they would arrive between nine and ten in the morning, filling its small area with smoke and dirty cups—for the only refreshment I had to give them was an enormous pot of tea. Sipping tea, smoking and talking Russian vehemently, and generally all at once—or so it seemed—making plans which never came off, they would occupy the place till I was nearly due to return.

I had a brother, six years older than myself, who had recently qualified as a doctor and was doing a *locum* for a medical man who practised somewhere in Brondesbury. I gave him a duplicate latchkey of my rooms, so that he could look in and read in privacy whenever he liked, whether I was at home or not. These were the days of professional top-hats and tail-coats; and one morning, in these solemn garments, he let himself bang into the middle of one of the Russian meetings. It seems that he filled the conspirators with suspicion, for they could only suppose he was some emissary from Scotland Yard. Presumably they talked about irrelevant matters whilst waiting for him to go or take some action. But my brother was a very matter-of-fact young man, and all he did was to say "Good-morning," throw

himself into an easy chair, take out a paper from his pocket and read the morning's news, as much detached as if he moved in another dimension. At the end of half an hour or so he said "Good-morning" once again and went, leaving alarm and suspicion behind him, and probably sharing my landlady's views that I had very strange friends.

These Nihilists—probably for good reasons—lived lives of great watchfulness and circumspection. I remember one morning, just after nine o'clock, going with a message to Stepniak's little house in St. John's Wood. It was one of those small detached villas with a narrow garden between it and the pavement, in those days associated with higher-class ladies of the town. Hansom cabs, with swell-looking men of every age, might be seen at any hour of the day or night stopping at these little villas. I knocked at Stepniak's front door, and knocked again. Then an upstairs window was opened, and a voice asked me who I was and what I wanted. I briefly explained. Someone, a Russian lady—not, I think, Mrs. Stepniak—came to the door, and the fierce barking of a dog could be heard. The door was carefully opened a few inches on the chain, the note which I had brought was taken, and the door shut again. Later I got to know Stepniak much better; indeed, I think it was he who was responsible for my getting on to the committee of the "Free Russia" movement.

There is a good deal of misunderstanding as to who the Nihilists were and as to their creed. A good impression of the mental atmosphere of the movement may be got by reading Turgeniev's *Fathers and Sons*. In his *Memoirs of a Revolutionist*, Peter Kropotkin pointed out that Nihilism is often confused with terrorism. He said that to confuse Nihilism with terrorism was as wrong as to confuse a philosophical movement like Stoicism or Positivism with a political movement such as, for example, Republicanism. Terrorism is the product of special passing political conditions, and disappears with these conditions. Nihilism once influenced the whole intellectual life of the educated classes of Russia, giving to them a certain peculiar character hardly ever found in the life of Western Europe. In 1861 Alexander II abolished serfdom in Russia; not out of sympathy with democracy, but on account of his conviction that it was politically expedient. The new middle-class which sprang up as a result of his rather milk-and-water reforms literally destroyed its creator. The Nihilists represented the school of those who took Western Europe as a model rather than the Slav culture of the East. Although the Nihilists were mostly Liberals, with a few Socialists, and Herzen's organ *Kolokol* was read even by the Emperor, the founders of the movement were largely University students; and their definitely terrorist technique drove many moderate reformers to join the reactionaries. In 1862 several prominent Radicals were exiled to Siberia, and, a year or two later, a Nihilist movement began to assert itself as a political force. In 1866 a man (not a Nihilist) fired a shot at the Emperor, and a governmental reaction set in. Prince Kropotkin and Bakunin were then prominent on the revolutionary stage. In 1881, just as Alexander II resumed the introduction of political reform, he was assassinated by terrorist bombs.

The essential feature of the Nihilist creed was absolute sincerity; a casting-off of all the conventionalities of civilised mankind. All superstitions, prejudices, customs and habits which could not be justified by individual reason were to be given up. Reason constituted the Nihilist's sole authority. Philosophically he was an agnostic, a scientific materialist or a positivist, and utterly condemned the assumption of a mask of religion. "Nihilism," says Kropotkin, "with its affirmation of the rights of the individual and its negation of all hypocrisy, was but a first step towards a higher type of men and women, who are equally free, but live for a great cause."

My last contact with the Russian revolutionary movement was in many ways the strangest of all. Shortly before Lenin assumed supreme power in Russia, I received a letter from my friend Edith Eder (wife of my even more intimate friend, Dr. M. D. Eder) asking me if I would see her niece, Ivy Low, the almost juvenile authoress of the sociological novel *The Questing Beast*, and her husband, Maxim Litvinov, and, from my wide experience, advise them as to a new career. They came to see me over my surgery in Stepney (now demolished by a high explosive bomb). They were hesitating between two ventures. One was to start a bookshop in the Charing Cross Road, with a tea-room at the back (I had recently started something of the kind at Petersfield in Hampshire); the alternative was to start a poultry-farm, on which I had recently written a handbook. I asked them if they liked getting up early and working like niggers, cleaning out and fumigating poultry-houses, and sticking to it day and night. I soon found that they hated getting up in the morning, that they didn't know a cock from a hen, and that they loathed the sort of work I described. They thought they could leave it to paid helpers to do all the dirty work. I explained that poultry-keeping under those circumstances was a hopeless means of livelihood; and that, of the two schemes they had in mind, I strongly recommended the bookshop and tea-room. They obviously liked books and knew a lot about them. But even here, I said, a fair lot of capital was wanted to make a start; how much had they? They explained that they had nothing, but didn't think there would be much trouble in raising a loan. I wished them well, but never saw them again. The next I heard of them was the statement in the papers that Maxim Litvinov had been sent for to assume the foreign secretaryship of Soviet Russia. As everybody knows, they are both still alive and both at the centre of the world's power. Eder and Mrs. Eder are both dead.

HARRY ROBERTS

EGYPTIAN BEGGAR

Old as a coat on a chair; and his crushed hand,
as unexpressive as a bird's face, held
out like an offering, symbol of the blind,
he gropes our noise for charity. You could build
his long-deserted face up out of sand,
or bear his weakness as a child.

Shuffling the seconds of a drugged watch, he
attends no answer to his rote; for soul's
and body's terrible humility,
stripped year by year a little barer, wills
nothing: he claims no selfhood in his cry:
his body is an age that feels.

As if a mask, a tattered blanket, should
live for a little before falling, when
the body leaves it: so briefly in his dead
feathers of rags, and rags of body, and in
his crumpled mind, the awful and afraid
stirs and pretends to be a man.

Earth's degradation and the voice of earth;
colour of earth and clothed in it; his eyes
white pebbles blind with deserts; the long growth
of landscape in his body: as if these
or these dead acres horribly gave birth:
here will fall from him like disguise.

Only a sad and humble motion keeps
the little space he is, himself: to row
his mindless caves with ritual hand and lips,
and wonder dimly at his guilt: with no
memory of it now: it was perhaps
too fearful, or too long ago.

TERENCE TILLER

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A NOTE ON JEAN-PAUL SARTRE

THE influence of Sartre in France and the curiosity his opinions excite in England, are such that some further account of his philosophy seems required.

Mr. Raymond Mortimer has dealt with the plays and novels of Sartre, but failed, as he frankly admitted, to grasp the principles underlying Existentialism. This would not be a serious matter were the literary aspects of Sartre's writings only in question. Once, however, the philosopher takes to the stage and the pages of fiction, then he can be and is dangerous if not properly understood.

I am no philosopher myself, nor have I read Mr. Ayer's essay on Existentialism in *Horizon*. I have, however, discussed Sartre's viewpoint eagerly with literary friends abroad, and, thanks to the clear and nimble brain of the young Belgian philosopher, Jacques Gérard, we were able to fill in the background so vital to a full understanding of Sartre.

Man starts his existence as part of the one Universal Being. He is then, if you like, a Fundamental Being (l'être en soi), and there are latent within him all kinds of potentialities that the Individual Being (l'être pour soi) can tap and turn to good or bad account. The relationship that exists between Fundamental Being and Individual Being is the sum total of human frailty. For the Individual Being is constantly drawing strength to himself from the possibilities latent in his Fundamental Being. Only in this way can he *live*—think, move, act. When Mr. Mortimer sums up Camus's novel *L'Etranger* as presenting a man "drifting through life without volition," he is describing accurately what Camus intended to portray but neglecting the reason why the man behaves in this manner. From the very first sentence of the first page of the book it is apparent that the hero is *not* alive—alive, that is in this philosophical sense where the springs of life are drawn from the necessary inter-reaction between the Fundamental and the Individual Being. And the hero, remaining in the state of Fundamental Being, can experience nothing but the primitive impulses of:

"Birth, copulation, death."

Death only may withdraw Man from all the possibilities open to him, and when Man dies he returns to the state of the Fundamental Being, carrying with him his Hell—the sum total of the events that have made up his crowded life, now irrevocably fixed and incapable of change or a shifting of emphasis. So argues Sartre in *Huis Clos*. This is the explanation for the unshaded electric light, the locked door, the bricked-up windows. Such a Hell *is* claustrophobic.

There are no mirrors, however, in this room. The eyelids, too, of each character, have withered away so that they gaze unblinkingly about them like some species of bird, denied even a moment's respite, yet unable to see—because of the lack of mirrors—into their own self. They are condemned eternally to observe each other:

"Alors il faut vivre les yeux ouverts . . . Pour toujours. Il fera grand jour dans mes yeux."

And there is the refinement of torture. We are only aware of the presence of another being by his *look*. His *look* betrays the impression we have left with him. He is unaware of the shifting doubts, decisions, aspirations towards greatness and self-sacrifice that are going on in us behind the scenes—the struggle between Fundamental Being and Individual Being. The other person judges by *results*, by what he observes in behaviour:

"'Regarde dans mes yeux! Est-ce que tu t'y vois? Pose-moi des questions. Aucun miroir ne sera plus fidèle . . . N'aie pas peur; il faut que je te regarde, mes yeux resteront grands ouverts."

And, because in a state of Death the characters have returned to the essential state of the Fundamental Being, there is no opportunity now, as there was in Life, to strut and pose; to present to the other those facets of the character and personality that would be found pleasing—as opposed to the real self that was often debased and unworthy; to change radically the real self.

That then is the picture of Hell Sartre offers us—a Hell of our own making, carried within us, within us for all time, for:

"Nous sommes ensemble pour toujours! . . . Nous resterons jusqu'au bout seuls ensemble."

All man can do, therefore, is to face with a stout heart a situation of his own contriving. As the curtain falls on the closing scenes of the play the echo, "Pour toujours" is in our ears. Then Garcin, the pacifist and deserter steps forward:

"Eh bien, continuons!"

A sombre philosophy. Mr. Mortimer marvels that "the actions of these professional pessimists (Camus and Sartre) proved the reality of their hopes." I know these men of the Resistance—not Camus or Sartre—have talked and lived with them. They built solidly, their feet firmly on the ground. They are pessimists because they are realists. Garcin is their prototype. Surely better this than flights of airy optimism leading . . .?

"Eh bien, continuons!"

Theirs is true courage, though it be not true tragedy in the literary or artistic sense. VERNON MALLINSON

MATISSE AND PICASSO

THE Picasso and Matisse exhibition in the Victoria and Albert Museum, arranged with the help of the British Council, is a very welcome and exciting event. In a sense it is also historic, for it marks the triumphant conclusion of a campaign that has lasted for some thirty-five years. A little band of enthusiasts discovered and proclaimed the outstanding gifts of these two painters, but almost all our scholars, art critics and Royal Academicians dismissed them as practical jokers, charlatans or maniacs. When I first joined in the fray, some twenty-two years ago, it was still thought most eccentric to admire Matisse and Picasso. And I cannot let pass the present occasion without a tribute to Mr. Clive Bell, who in these columns for so many years waged guerrilla warfare with all the resources of his wit, his wide knowledge and his resolute taste, until the Philistines succumbed or were scattered. Last week at the formal opening of the exhibition at South Kensington nothing, so far as I could hear, was said about either Roger Fry or Mr. Bell. But then, as our American friends never cease reminding us, it is most unwise to enter any struggle until the worst is over.

I think it foolish to argue about the comparative stature of Picasso and Matisse. But I must insist that in any case this exhibition, impressive as it is, does not afford grounds for any such comparison. Matisse is superbly represented by thirty paintings from every stage of his career between 1896 and 1944. Picasso has preferred to send—with one exception—only works painted during the war, a period which, I suspect, will not count among the most auspicious in the numerous phases through which this incomparably protean artist has scudded. I think, moreover, that he has already left it behind; for some pictures I saw in Paris in July were much richer in colour, and more lively in execution, than these products of the war.

I do not mean that the Picassos at the V. and A. could conceivably be the work of any but a great master. Indeed, the *Femme à la mandoline* strikes me as a noble picture. (The other large canvas, which I think the most beautiful Picasso here, was painted just before the war began.) The *Fenêtre à la tête de bœuf*, the *Femme au chapeau poisson*, the Still Life with the skull and the leeks—these are all astounding. Picasso wrote a play during the occupation reflecting a similar preoccupation with food, and one picture here is chiefly taken up with a radiator: probably Picasso has chosen to send these pictures just because they reflect the miseries of life in an occupied country. They seem to me not so much tragic as raucous with disgust and suffering. I do not mean that they are too overtly didactic. On the contrary they will say little to most people, and I fear that the official æsthetic of the Communists will have to be drastically revised before the works of their latest recruit can be admitted. But the expressiveness does seem to me to have spilt over the plastic forms intended to carry it. That has indeed happened in several previous crises of Picasso's evolution. He is not a Spaniard for nothing; and some of these paintings remind me of those polychrome statues of Christ—covered, as it were, with a rash of scourge-marks—in which the Renaissance sculptors of Spain similarly combined virtuosity and obsession. It is to be expected that the emotions hurled day by day upon these canvases will eventually be given more permanent form. In the meanwhile one must admit that no other living man has the power to project such formidable images.

The Matisses no longer present any problems—one has to make an effort of memory to understand why they ever did. Here is a gloriously gifted, gloriously French, artist who, like most great painters, has spent his life delighting in the colours and shapes of the visible world, especially those of women, of flowers, of landscapes. His invention in colour is prodigious (and incidentally the colour of the walls at the V. and A., which I can best describe as an aggressive peach, is peculiarly ill suited as a background for Matisses). Some of these pictures (5 and 17, for instance) show him no less felicitous in an adagio than in the allegro which is his usual preference. The very naturalistic seascape and the almost abstract *Fenêtre sur le jardin* represent the extremes, both very beautiful, between which his style has moved; and a Still Life with lemons and mimosas painted last year shows that serious illness—I believe he can now paint only in bed—has taken nothing from his executive powers.

Picasso can be as utterly delightful as Matisse, and even more sensual. But his choice of pictures for London only exaggerates what is a persistent difference between the two painters. Matisse is nothing if not thoughtful, and yet manages to give his pictures an air of pure spontaneity: his is a supreme instance of the maxim "ars est celare artem." Picasso is more emotional, or at least more dramatic. In twentieth-century painting they represent the two great and ancient families of artists—the Apollonian and the Dionysiac, Raphael and Michelangelo, Ingres and Goya, Mozart and Beethoven, Tennyson and Browning—in every art, in almost every period, such contrasting twins are to be found. And we are indeed blessed in our present Dioscuri.

ROGER MARVELL

RADIO NOTES

READY as we are to welcome the return of Nurse Dugdale, I suggest that it is time something was done to vary her programme. The musical items are feeble and anyway give the impression of being stuffed in merely to give Arthur Marshall a bit of a rest. This would be all right if only he would consent to harp upon all his strings instead of just one. It is not as if Major Marshall were incapable of more than one turn; his range of observation is wide and his powers of malicious imitation far more considerable than Variety seem willing to allow him to display. After quite a short time the roguish spinster, with her brave brusquerie and her slang of day-before-yesterday boyhood, begins to cloy. The mosaicists who compose these harlequinades rarely seem to know when enough is enough; yet in no kind of entertainment is constant variety of *tone* more necessary; like a kaleidoscope, it must be for ever tumbling into new and surprising shapes and colours. To change the metaphor, it is a thin ice over which we must be able to slide so rapidly that we have no time to sink through, for underneath is the void. Itma, which transcribes our lives with a virtuosity and a mythological fidelity that astonish me more every week, observes all the rules. Incidentally, I notice that Nurse Dugdale seems to have strayed into this programme under the pseudonym of Lady Soanley (*sic?*); but in this guise she is never permitted to outstay her welcome. In fact, one of the most cunning features of Itma is the teasing manner in which our favourite characters—be it Major Mundy, Colonel Chinstrap, or Dan Fairfechan—are invariably whisked away from the mike before we have had enough of them ("Isn't it a shime! Isn't it a shime!"). If Ted Kavanagh should ever feel his genius flagging (of which there is at present no sign), he could hardly do better than induce Beachcomber to take over for a time. His humour is in the same tradition.

The replies to the S.O.S. which I sent out some weeks ago to my readers have been overwhelmingly in favour of my continuing the Recommendations with which this column ends. I must, therefore, express my regrets to those more prescient people who find the *Radio Times* quite sufficient and would have preferred me to use the space for other matter. Continuing in the same vein, I regret even more that, in last week's issue, Mr. Guy Verney's name should have appeared as "Gery Kenney."

RECOMMENDATIONS. — *December 16th.* Music Magazine (11 a.m.); Concert with Pouishnoff (2.30 p.m.); "Lord Rutherford" (9.15 p.m.); Time for Verse (10.38 p.m.); Manuel de Falla concert (11.5 p.m.).

December 17th. Beethoven (every morning, 9.30 a.m.); The Rose and the Ring (L.P., 12.45 p.m.); Introduction to Russian Music (L.P., 3 p.m.); Book Talk (Geoffrey Grigson, 6.30 p.m.); Mr. Pitt's Niece (9.15 p.m.).

December 18th. Scandinavian Orchestral Music (records, 11 a.m.); English Ensemble (3.30 p.m.); Millais's "Carpenter's Shop" (Talk by D. S. MacColl, 11.3 p.m.).

December 19th. Beethoven and Debussy Recital (1.15 p.m.); Prince Igor (7.15 p.m.); World Affairs (Talk by Sir Frederick Whyte, 9.15 p.m.); How to deal with Christmas (10.15 p.m.).

December 20th. Matthew Arnold (Forces Educational Broadcast, L.P., 3 p.m.); Concert with Kentner (L.P., 4.45 p.m.); Thomas Carlyle (Talk by Ian Finlay, 6.30 p.m.); Music in Miniature (L.P., 8.30 p.m.).

December 21st. Organ Recital (Olivier Messiaen, 11.30 a.m.); Concert (Symphony Orchestra, 7 p.m.); The Minstrel Boy (Talk on John McCormack by L. A. G. Strong, 8.15 p.m.); Edward Thomas (11.30 p.m.). EDWARD SACKVILLE WEST

THE MOVIES

"Caesar and Cleopatra," at the Marble Arch Odeon

"They Were Expendable," at the Empire

The film version of *Caesar and Cleopatra* is that and no more: a translation, a transliteration, of the original. How could it be otherwise? Shaw belongs essentially to the theatre, to a theatre (as he saw it) given over to fashionable melodrama and the more pompous kind of Shakespeare revival. The conventions to be broken were stage conventions. With *Caesar and Cleopatra* (1898) he demolished historical drama of the padded romantic kind (this had already been done elsewhere by Strindberg and others), and raised the cry, "Better than Shakespeare?" which shocked almost as much as the adjective in *Pygmalion*. His particular importation, of course, was not current manners and speech, but the Shavian wit that invests the characters. Cleopatra, aged sixteen, he reduced to twelve or so (Shakespeare's Juliet was fourteen), in order to mark her transformation, under Caesar's tuition, into a queen; the royal cat must be shown first as a playful kitten. Cæsar brings out the claws; and being a great man, receives the attributes of a philosopher-buffoon—highest possible praise. Well, they are fun, the bald old gentleman and the vicious schoolgirl, and their flirtation carries off a play that might otherwise prove pretty tedious. Cæsar announcing himself to the Sphinx as "part brute, part woman and part god—nothing of man in me at all," does by his subsequent words and actions convince us of greatness of a kind, if not the conquering kind. He triumphs by virtue of a caustic fancy, spouting out of the Prefaces, wearing Wolsey next the skin.

But what has all this to do with the cinema? That is what we go to the new Odeon to discover, and the undoubtedly sumptuous performance may leave our question unanswered. The film no more succeeds in creating an historical atmosphere than does the play. How could it? But it has to provide a Technicolor setting, to show us a Sphinx and a desert, the Mediterranean, streets and a square in Alexandria, the palace rooms, armies clashing, people thronging; and agreeable though this may be at times, it does little to help a situation created by subtle stagecraft. The effect, indeed, is to dispel illusion by bringing on stage events that belong properly to a shadowy circumference: the military manœuvres, for example, here highly unconvincing. Then, again, Shaw's dialogue, so appropriate to the theatre, sounds at times stagey away from it, especially in the more homely jokes—how flat the stumbling over "Ftatateeta" fell!—and in the longer speeches and soliloq-

quies. Cæsar's prayer to the Pyramid seemed interminable, while the camera looking from one to the other only impressed us with its desperate clockwork. As though to counteract this, the buffoonery of Cæsar's first public meeting with Cleopatra and Ptolemy was badly overdone; a proper balance between moments of seriousness and fooling wasn't reached until later. Both the director, Gabriel Pascal, and his principal actors seemed uneasy about beginning, but this was a fault that wore off as Cæsar (Claude Rains) and Cleopatra (Vivien Leigh) came to a closer understanding. Mr. Rains, teasing, pert, sympathetic, wily, urbanely inflexible, grows more and more into the part; he takes it perhaps, rather too quizzically; there's a touch of bravado, not to say bounce, in all Shaw's supermen. Miss Vivien Liegh made a ravishing Cleopatra in all moods. Among the rest, Miss Flora Robson as Ftatateeta and Mr. Cecil Parker as Britannus, did more than well. The whole film, however, particularly in its first half, tends to drag, and its moments of satisfaction for the eye are rare. One remembers people hurrying in panic down a corridor open to the sky, and the feast on the palace-roof in the sunset—not a great deal more. Quite apart from the filmability of Shaw—which despite *Pygmalion*, I think open to question—*Cæsar and Cleopatra* never approaches the mastery of Olivier's *Henry V*. It transmits very efficiently; it does not re-create.

They Were Expendable is a semi-documentary of Patrol Torpedo boats in the Pacific. It has some magnificent scenes of naval action, but the characters seem thin and altogether it just fails to come up to the book by W. L. White from which it has been taken. Director, John Ford; who shows himself occasionally in a fine use of light and shade.

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

NEW MUSIC

Prokofiev's Cello Concerto.—"First performance in Europe," said the announcements at the Stoll last Sunday. Unheard then, we must presume, by Moscow or Leningrad, although it was during the four years of its composition (1934–1938) that Prokofiev returned to Russia. No doubt, those years were a distracting period in the composer's life; the music shows signs of having been too frequently put away into a drawer, and fished out again when the ideas had begun to congeal. It begins beautifully, in the composer's familiar lyrical vein; a steady march of those neat, drily orchestrated chords which somehow suggest a child's box of bricks, sudden agreeable dives into remote keys, and a cantilena of considerable charm and point for the soloist. But after the first movement, composition seems to proceed by fits and starts, the bricks lie scattered all over the nursery floor, and—most of all—dryness creeps in. It takes the highly respectable form of that sort of "busy" writing which is the bane of so much contemporary music (the eighteenth century suffered from a similar complaint). Not even the skill of the admirable soloist, M. Maurice Gendron, could save the last two movements from seeming too long for their content.

The Prokofiev was preceded by an unusually sensitive performance, by Walter Susskind and the L.P.O., of Shostakovich's beautiful *First Symphony*, on which I am inclined to put my money as the next big public discovery in the Tchaikovsky-Rachmaninoff class: say, about ten years from now.

Anthony Hopkins.—In the second of two interesting concerts at the Wigmore Hall, Mr. Jani Strasser included a new cantata by Anthony Hopkins called *The Crown of Gold*. Mr. Hopkins is making a name for himself with his incidental music for radio and stage; and many readers will have heard his effective setting for the Old Vic *Oedipus*. *The Crown of Gold*, cast roughly into the form of a Bach cantata, attracts the ear at once by the directness of its emotional impulse, which takes shape in some vigorous and uninhibited writing for solo voices, especially for the soprano; it ought therefore, by rights, to have advanced its young composer's reputation. But the most accomplished of our English musicians show a mysterious tendency to collaborate with less brilliant contemporaries in the other arts. Mr. Hopkins has chosen a librettist who makes his bow in an author's note containing the regrettable epithet "extra-creedal." Two versions of his quasi-mystical poem were printed: one as first conceived, the other after submission to the usual musical pressure. Comparison was occasionally repaying. Thus, where A.V. has this:

the *empty tins* of travellers lost and gone.

R.V. has merely this:

the *emptiness* of travellers lost and gone.

The author says modestly that his words "should not be read as of any interest in themselves." Agreed.

DESMOND SHAWE-TAYLOR.

Correspondence

JEWS AND ARABS

SIR,—I think the enclosed letter will be of interest to your readers. It was written on November 15th, 1945, by a British soldier (a Gentile), who has been for some months in Palestine after about three years in North Africa and Italy.

The situation here [in Palestine] goes from bad to worse. Perhaps I, from my brief but I hope sound and unbiased appreciation, can counteract the one-sided representation which the press can hardly fail to give. I need hardly tell you that it does concern you, because the average Briton makes no distinction between Jews and Zionists, and the average soldier makes no distinction between Jews and Terrorists.

Bevin's latest pronouncement, indicating yet further delay and avoidance of issues, has caused the pot to boil over. Riots and demonstrations in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv yesterday resulted in the shooting of two Jews and the injury of about a hundred on both sides. Tel Aviv to-day is bristling with barricades and machine guns. Stones are being hurled at every military and police vehicle. Here is a view of Tel Aviv which the press and military refuse to see or present: of the population of Tel Aviv (estimated 250,000) less than 25 per cent. (actually under 50,000) attended the mass meeting of protest, although a general strike was proclaimed for the purpose. Of those 50,000, less than *one per cent.* did anything more than march in an orderly manner to the meeting place and back, having listened quietly to the speeches. The whole trouble was caused by a gang of about 200 hooligans, mostly boys and girls in the early teens, who first attacked the orderly column withdrawing from the meeting, then turned on the police. The vast majority of Jews in Palestine want nothing more than to be left alone to work out their destiny in peace, to live and let live. Yet, because a few young lunatics throw stones and get shot, there's hardly a British officer in Palestine to-day who is not saying: "Shoot the Jews; bomb them to hell; wipe out the bloody lot!" If *you* feel like weeping, how should I feel?

24,000 Palestinian Jews voluntarily gave their services to the Allied cause during the war, fought with the Jewish Brigade in Italy, helped to defend their own land, and many gave their lives. You would think that that had earned a little gratitude, a little recognition? Not a scrap.

The Arab is quiet. He might well be. He has made a good thing out of the war in the way of food and wages in return for a scale of labour that would make even a British navvy blush with shame. He has sold hundreds of acres (or "dunams") of sand-dune and desert to the Jew—sold at an exorbitant price—land which has only become desert because of his own inability to cultivate it and preserve its life, land from which he has taken for hundreds of years with never a thought of putting anything back into it. The Jew, backed by adequate capital, converts the desert into a smiling, fertile settlement, where pretty nigh anything will grow. He makes money. He makes lives, for the people who work there are alive again. They are happy. Whereupon the Arab shrieks to the world: "Look at the wicked Jews! They are stealing my country! I have been here for thousands of years! Now they are driving me out!"

But wait! The proportion of Palestinian Arabs who raise such a cry is very, very small. The majority of such outcries come from political agents who have no interest in Palestine whatsoever. The vast majority of the Arabs in Palestine are perfectly content to have the Jews living with them, because the Jews bring the two things which alone make Palestine fit to live in—irrigation and fertilisation. The future of Palestine lies in agriculture. The future of agriculture in Palestine lies in irrigation and artificial manures. I wish you could see this soil. I wish you could see this climate. Here we are in mid-November, and there has been *one* shower of rain in the last *nine* months. But there are hundreds of farms and settlements which are as green as an English spring. They can grow oranges, lemons, grapefruit, bananas, potatoes, tomatoes, all kinds of vegetables, wheat, barley, beet, beans, peas, soft fruits—yes, even *grass*. No Arab farmer ever grew grass since the days when Christ walked the land. I have visited these settlements. Only three of them so far—Givat Brener, Na'an and Kfar Menahem. I have seen people happy in their work. I have seen the miracle that can be wrought by Man in co-operation with God and Nature. I have seen children treated as they should be, as the sacred trust for the future. The education schemes on the settlements are the most advanced, the most realistic and the most effective of any education schemes in the whole world. The loveliest, healthiest, most intelligent children are here, in Palestine, on the settlements. The wages of their parents are *nil!*

And here is something the newspapers don't mention. At Givat Brener and Na'an the water supply provided by the Jews is used by the Arabs of the neighbouring villages; if it weren't for that water the Arabs could not exist. They like it, and they like the Jews. At Kfar Menahem, the Jews have paid £15,000 for a road—their settlement being six miles away from the nearest main road. That road could have been made straight. It has been made crooked in order to serve two Arab villages which would otherwise be cut off from civilisation (unless you can call a track five feet deep in mud a communication) during the rainy season. The Arabs have provided the labour to build the road. On the same settlement there are three tractors. Two of them belong to the Arabs. They are used on the land of both Jew and Arab. The modern silo for storing and drying grain is used by both Jew and Arab.

I haven't seen everything. I have seen enough to convince me that Jew and Arab *can* live together, to the mutual advantage of both. At present there are (roughly) a million Arabs and half a million Jews in the country. I am convinced that the country will support a population of at least four millions.

But the British Government ignores realities, adheres to a policy which was up to date in 1919 (but is now thirty years out of date) and then wonders why people start throwing stones! Where else should the Jews go, or want to go, but Palestine?

G.

ITALY

SIR,—An Italian correspondent of mine quotes, this week, a mutual English friend who has just returned to Italy after demobilisation—"Come si sta bene in Italia! Si rubera, si ingannera, si spendera troppo, ma in cambio ci si sente rinascere!" (Or, to paraphrase briefly, "Italy is grand! Theft, cheating, extravagance—but one gets a kick out of life!") My correspondent adds: "I am curious to see what will Italy look like when all the English and American 'Ventusiasti' will settle down here as they plan . . . every day the list of people who say they can't stand America or England any more gets longer. . . ."

After being in Italy from 1943 onwards, with opportunities of roving in a country which I knew fairly well, your article "Crisis in Italy" seems to me to lay undue stress on political squibs which may have very little to do with the real Italy. They take the foreign headlines: but in my experience the average Italian likes, as his own theatres and newspapers emphatically show, to laugh at *all* politicians: at present particularly he resents any movement, be it C.N.L., Monarchist, Christian Democrat or what-you-will, which threatens to imperil the first peaceful period he has known for ten years—or, if you like, for twenty-three. This attitude made the Allies extremely welcome *at first;* and the ancient friendship, based on condescending Anglo-Saxon affection for attractive roguery and gay Italian prodding of Anglo-Saxon phlegm, seemed to revive. Unfortunately, life as a ruler in the sunshine at Italian expense proved so attractive that the Allied Commission proceeded to

outstay its welcome, thereby producing a sense of frustration, irresponsibility and, I hazard, xenophobia. In such circumstances elections controlled by an alien occupying authority become a farce.

Your article states :

> Italy has been administered by a Coalition to which the Allies have denied any real power to govern. . . . Belatedly it is announced that A.M.G. in the North is shortly to be wound up. This will end the fantastic situation in which the Italian Prime Minister cannot travel from one Italian city to another without Allied permission. But there is no indication yet when Italy may be free from the paralysing jurisdiction of the Allied Commission. . . .

True : but it should be remarked that the winding-up of A.M.G. has been, as I understand, postponed, and—more important—that A.C. and A.M.G. are not distinct, but one and the same, with the same personnel. A winding-up of A.M.G. is supposed to be a prelude to relaxed restrictions, but it doesn't alter the final authority. And in fairness to A.C.A.M.G. (as it should properly be written) it must be added that, so long as it rules in the name of Allied law and order, so long must it control speeches by Italian ministers which are or may be subversive of that law and order. You state that the Allied commission

> has created the impression that the cardinal principle of Allied policy has been to prevent the Resistance from carrying through a social revolution.

Accurate but unfair. If you are keeping order you cannot allow revolution. The vast majority of Civil Affairs Officers don't care a hoot about Italian politics : their job is to ensure food, transport, shelter, clothing and stability. Rows, whether coming from the Left or Right, they must stop. But, according to your article,

> . . . we can make it plain that we are determined that . . . elections in Italy shall be held without threats of violence from the Right . . . it must be clearly understood that . . . we have no intention of allowing liberated Italy to be victimised once again by Fascism.

So—we *are* to interfere, but on the side of the Left? Why? "Violence" (and not most of it) has come chiefly from Nenni, Togliatti, and the changeable C.N.L., not from Bonomi or Parri or de Gasperi or Croce. What does your writer mean by the C.N.L.? The C.N.L. was Bonomi, it was Parri—it is a chameleon. No one can say to-day with any certainty that the Italian people want Monarchy, Republic, Left, Right, or Centre. What can be said with certainty is that Italians are sick to death of dictatorship, by the Right, by the Left, or by an occupying force. What can also be said is that they are an amazingly happy people in a grousing world : and I wager that they will find their own happy, if un-Anglo-Saxon, solution if they are allowed to do it.

LIONEL FIELDEN

55 Park Lane, London, W.1.

B.B.C. REPORTING

SIR,—To defend a principle is never irrelevant. That is why I answered first "Critic's" general charge of bias in B.B.C. bulletins. I shall now accept his invitation to deal with the particular item he referred to.

The facts are these. The B.B.C. received a message from its Berlin Correspondent that a British Mess had unexpectedly been raided by the Russians in search of deserters, and that while it was understood that raids were authorised, those in charge of this Mess had no warning. We included this message in the ordinary way in our bulletins. Our report was accurate. It was brief. It was not sensational. It was not mentioned in the headlines and came half-way down the bulletins. It is much the same as the "modest" position in *The Times* which Critic approves

Later, the British military authorities explained that such raids were authorised when accompanied by British officers, but that this Russian patrol had acted independently. The statement added that had a British escort been present as agreed, the patrol would not have been permitted to enter the Mess.

This later report was not a correction. It did not in any way alter the truth of what we had already broadcast. As it only confirmed and expanded the original message it was not used. Since then the Russian General has apologised for the raid.

If Critic would like me to take up more space in dealing with items in our news bulletins I shall be glad to do so. But he really must not expect me to join him in a wild-goose chase for Gunpowder Plots at Bush House.

A. P. RYAN,
Controller (News).

Broadcasting House.

[A switch over to an eye-witness report of a Russian raid on the British correspondents' mess during a short news bulletin is surely "sensational." Mr. Macdonald moreover gave his report, before he knew (*a*) that on this night the Russians had been *authorised* to send patrols into the British Zone to round up deserters, and (*b*) that the particular patrol, which mistakenly raided the correspondents' mess, did so because it failed to contact the British officer due to accompany it. His "hot" report therefore gave an entirely different impression from that of *The Times* correspondent, who waited to obtain the full story, before sending his report.

Any listener on Saturday must have concluded that the Russians had been guilty of a gross and deliberate violation of international courtesy. The statement by the British Military authorities destroyed this false impression by explaining how a genuine mistake came about. I am amazed that Mr. Ryan, when he received the full story, did not feel that the B.B.C. should correct this false impression, particularly in view of the stir caused by its previous mistake about the "arrest" of the Co-operative Delegation in Poland.—ED., *N.S. & N.*]

SPANISH BROADCASTS

SIR,—"Critic" in referring to the "purge" of the Spanish Section of the B.B.C. European Service gives credit for the success of the Spanish broadcasts during the war largely to the victims of the "purge." It is, I feel, only right to point out that the success of the broadcasts was firmly established by the time we were appointed at the end of 1943 to the posts from which we have now been removed, though both of us, of course, had been working in connection with the broadcasts since 1941.

Much of the success of the broadcasts during the war, in my view, was due to (*a*) sensible direction from the Centre at Bush House, which enabled the regional staff to have plenty of scope while at the same time ensuring as far as possible that London spoke with one voice, and (*b*) the brilliant team of Spaniards, who devoted their knowledge and skill to what they firmly believed was the common cause.

Since the reorganisation of the European Service this summer, proper direction from the Centre scarcely exists ; the post of Director of European Broadcasts has been abolished, and there is now no real machinery for co-ordinating policy in both news and talks in the different regions.

Even more disastrous in the case of the Spanish broadcasts, at any rate, is the lack of imagination now being shown in the use made of the Spanish commentators. To judge by listening regularly to the broadcasts in Spanish, the Spanish commentators are now no longer being used to "comment"—which is after all, the principal function of commentators—but merely to translate and compile talks.

Senor Madariaga in his book *Spain*, makes an illuminating remark about the tastes of the Spanish newspaper reader which is equally relevant to listeners to broadcasts. "The national proclivity to put the stress on man rather than on things carries, as its corollary," he writes, "that the newspaper reader in Spain is more interested in views than in news. His stand is, that since there is no getting away from man at bottom all news is views, and therefore views pure and simple is better than views parading as news. Moreover, news is ephemeral and its bloom goes with

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the day; views have a more permanent value and allow the reader to scent the fragrance of a human mind."

No broadcasting service can afford to ignore the tastes of the audience, and an unforgivable sin in broadcasting is to be dull. It is true that all comment of a political nature does not seem to have disappeared from the Spanish broadcasts, for I was surprised to hear on Friday afternoon, December 7th, a very controversial talk in the Spanish service written by Douglas Woodruff, a Director of the *Tablet*, in praise of King Leopold of the Belgians and criticising the attitude of "freemasons" towards him. Political comment with a more democratic flavour, however, does seem to be excluded now, particularly as regards Spanish affairs, from the Talks by the once highly popular Spanish commentators.

It is difficult to believe that if this goes on much longer the B.B.C. will be able to hold its audience in Spain. All the evidence in the past showed that the audience was largest, and most faithful among the common people of Spain, who share our faith in democracy.

HELEN F. GRANT

BURMA

SIR,—I wonder whether it would be asking too much to request H.M. Government to include Burma in the itinerary of the proposed Parliamentary Delegation to India, because I am certain that such a visit will help to better the understanding and relations between our two countries. Also the Delegates will be able to find out for themselves whether the Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League is really totalitarian as it has been made out in some quarters. It is quite likely and possible, however, that the desire of the Supreme Council of the League to keep its unity at all cost appears dictatorial to some observers not well acquainted with the ups and downs of Burmese politics between the two World Wars. Then, in the 'twenties, the General Council of Burmese Associations was broken up, due to personal ambitions of some of the leaders, thereby causing much harm to the interests of the country.

MAUNG OHN
Representative in Britain of the Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League and the All-Burma Youth League.

CALCUTTA RISKS

SIR,—The enclosed extract from a letter sent from a British officer in Calcutta on November 12th, might be of interest in view of the letter from Mr. Quinton in your issue of December 8th:

. . . . last night, in one of the main streets of Calcutta there was a procession of young students marching to hold a protest against the trial of the I.N.A. men. The police barred the way, so they just sat down, hundreds of them, peaceably, in the road, blocking all traffic. They were like that for a long time and I was watching them. Then the military police moved off all servicemen—presumably the authorities do not want to have any unnecessary witnesses of their storm-trooping prowess—so, unfortunately, I was not able to watch developments. Apparently, from what I gather to-day, the deadlock continued for some time, the student leaders asking permission for the procession to go on, and the police refusing. Finally the students tried to march on and the police charged with their lathis: mounted police also charged in, seizing the nationalist banners and causing casualties as they used their lathis and rode over people with their horses. The students started throwing their books and anything else they had at the police. Shortly afterwards a police van was set on fire. The police then opened fire on this completely unarmed crowd of young students, killing at least one and wounding over 60, some of them seriously, a sad comment on how we maintain order all over S.E. Asia. To-day, in protest, Calcutta is almost at a standstill. Every bus, tram and rickshaw is off the street and shops are shut. There are crowds everywhere, and the students, now considerably reinforced, are still in position in Dharumtalla Street, where they stayed even when the police were firing. The areas where my friends are are now all cut off, so I shan't be able to see any of them before I leave, as we are confined to billets. . . .

B. P.

SKELETON CHILDREN

SIR,—A week ago I had an appeal asking if I could take European children. On the form I wrote: "No room owing to military dilapidations." Then I read Gollancz's appalling booklet giving photographs of German children all skin and bone, and we all, staff and pupils, knew that we must make room. We are willing to have two young under-nourished German (or Pole, Russian, French, any starveling) children to feed up for, say, a year. The booklet, *Is it Nothing to You?* should be shown to every boarding school in the land, for there must be many schools that would be as shocked as we were, and would gladly take one or two children.

Query: If Hitler's bust is worth £500, what is the body of one of his small victims worth?

A. S. NEILL
Summerhill School, Ltd.,
Leiston, Suffolk.

EXPORT TRADE

SIR,—I notice in your issue of Saturday, December 1st, under the leading article, "Who Goes Slow?" the following words:—

In order to build up an export trade (on whose durability he cannot rely) he must embark on an expensive sales organisation, and probably on a large outlay in new designs. Doubtful whether all this is "worth his while," he marks time.

May I suggest that part of this observation is very misleading. There is no need for a manufacturer who desires "to build up an export trade" to "embark on an expensive sales organisation." He can do his export trade on a cash basis here in England by making use of the export merchant, and if he does not know how to start this business may I suggest that he refers to the National General Export Merchants' Group, who will give him all the information he requires and put him on the right lines.

F. HICKINBOTHAM
Chairman, National General Export Merchants' Group.

UNITY THEATRE

SIR,—I am sure that all readers of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION will be interested to know of an ambitious new venture which is now being launched at Unity Theatre commencing February, 1946. We are launching a professional company on repertory lines which will be organised and run along the lines of the famous Theatre Workshops in America and the U.S.S.R.

Our aim is not merely to present plays with a professional cast, but to train a cadre of actors according to a particular style and method and to present vital, and new contemporary plays, and of the classics. It is our aim to build a Theatre Workshop.

All our actors will be given continuity of employment for a term of two to three years, and at the end of that time it is hoped that conditions will have so altered that it will be possible for us to move into a larger and finer theatre.

We cannot appeal to wealthy backers, but I would ask all interested readers of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION if they would care to contribute something large or small to the fund which we have launched in order to realise this project.

Cheques and Postal Orders should be sent to Unity Theatre, Goldington Street, N.W.1.

TED WILLIS
President.

KEEP IT WHITE!

Mr. Herbert Morrison, opening the Waterloo Bridge on Monday last, said: "Keep it white. Its whiteness is one of its glories." He called for a great anti-smoke campaign.

This campaign has been started by the National Smoke Abatement Society, which has a policy approved by many local authorities and other bodies, for the progressive abolition of smoke from all Britain. Now it needs wider public backing and more generous support. Membership is invited.

Send for details and publications including *Smokeless Zones* (3d.) and *Plan for Clean Air* (2d.).

NATIONAL SMOKE ABATEMENT SOCIETY
28, Chandos House, Buckingham Gate, London, S.W.1.
'Phone: Abbey 1359.

"... the years that the locust hath eaten ..."

Since 1939 large numbers of our men and women have been serving their country in the Forces.

Soon many of them will be returning to their homes, anxious to make a place for themselves in the life of a nation pursuing the arts of peace.

Constructive help will be needed in solving the many business problems that will confront them after long absence from the ordinary affairs of daily life.

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

HERE is a book like a Christmas tree, hung with brightness and beauty; and it will make the right Christmas present—if only you can find a copy: *Another World Than This*, by V. Sackville-West and Harold Nicolson (Michael Joseph, 10s. 6d.). It is an anthology made from passages marked by the compilers in books belonging to them. It thus represents, they explain, "the lifetime literary taste of two persons with somewhat different occupations in life; a taste pursued in each case from adolescence to middle-age; yet so curiously homogeneous in its ultimate result, that in a spirit of amused comparison they decided to pool their book-markings into one printed volume."

Let us begin by hearing the counsel for the prosecution. Such books as this, he says, ought to be specially pleasant to the eye. What excuse is there for the dowdy-genteel ornamentation on the spine which suggests Ella Wheeler Wilcox or Bournemouth in 1912? Why, he continues, do the compilers give only manuscript sources or very rare original editions for many of the poems, when on their own admission these all come from books they have marked? Is not this unkind to the first discoverers? And now for his last objection. The compilers explain that they have omitted many of the passages they had marked: "These omissions mean only that they do not wish to insult the fastidious reader by the inclusion of passages he already knew by heart or could readily find elsewhere." This puts us at once in a good temper, for it would be insufferable to be asked once again by Sir Walter Raleigh for his scallop-shell of quiet; to find Hopkins giving glory to God for dappled things, and Clare protesting that he is (but what he is none knows or cares), to hear that never weather-beaten sail more willing bent to shore, and that all the flowers of the spring meet to perfume our burying; to be told for the hundredth time that the glories of our blood and State are shadows, not substantial things; and all the tralala about the young lighthearted masters of the waves. Thank you, Miss Sackville-West, we cry, thank you, Mr. Nicolson; how wise of you to guess that we have a copy of the *Oxford Book of English Verse*. We start reading, and blimey there they are! Blood and state and scallop-shell and weather-beaten sail and dappled things and perfume our burying and masters of the waves, to say nothing of a-heart-of-furious-fancies, such-hounds-such-hawks-and-such-a leman, and even, bless his heart, the-man-of-life-upright!

And now the counsel for the defence. These insults to the reader—as the compilers, perhaps too heatedly, call them—occupy only a very small proportion of the book. Marking my copy, as they have marked so many of their books, I find dozens of poems that I did not know. Here is one that is agreeably topical:—

The helmet now an hive for bees becomes,
And hilts of swords may serve for spiders' looms;
Sharp pikes may make
Teeth for a rake;
And the keen blade, th' arch enemy of life,
Shall be degraded to a pruning knife.
The rustic spade
Which first was made
For honest agriculture, shall retake
Its primitive employment, and forsake
The rampires steep
And trenches deep.
Tame conies in our brazen gun shall breed,
Or gentle doves their young ones there shall feed.
In musket barrels
Mice shall raise quarrels
For their quarters. The ventriloquious drum,
Like lawyers in vacations, shall be dumb.
Now all recruits,
But those of fruits,
Shall be forgot; and th' unarmed soldier
Shall only boast of what he did whilere,
In chimneys' ends
Among his friends.

The author is one Ralph Knevet, 1600–1671, a clergyman who was chaplan or tutor to the Paston family. (This I have discovered from the D.N.B.; the compilers have refused, perhaps wisely, to clutter their text with any notes.)

Now for another present from the glittering tree, a Noah's Ark:—

The mouse paused in his walk
And dropped his wheaten stalk;
Grave cattle wagged their heads
In rumination;
The eagle gave a cry
From his cloud station:
Larks on thyme beds
Forbore to mount or sing;
Bees drooped upon the wing;
The raven perched on high
Forgot his ration;
The conies in their rock,
A feeble nation,
Quaked sympathetical;
The mocking-bird left off to mock;
Huge camels knelt as if
In deprecation;
The kind hart's tears were falling;
Chattered the wistful stork;
Dove-voices with a dying fall
Cooed desolation
Answering grief by grief.
Only the serpent in the dust,
Wriggling and crawling,
Grinned an evil grin and thrust
His tongue out with its fork.

I don't remember ever before noticing these delicious lines, and I suppose that this shows my ignorance; for their author is Christina Rossetti. (Notice how she uses "rumination" in the literal sense, rather as Knevet uses "ventriloquious.")

One more pretty toy:—

Crowned with flowers, I saw fair Amaryllis
By Thyrsis sit, hard by a fount of crystal,
And with her hand more white than snow or lilies
On sand she wrote "My faith shall be immortal,"
And suddenly a storm of wind and weather
Blew all her faith and sand away together.

This anonymous 17th century poem leads me to several short images that have caught the compilers' attention:—

The wings of man's life are plumed with the feathers of death.
—*From a petition addressed to Queen Elizabeth by a seaman.*

His thunder is entangled in my hair
And with my beauty is his lightning quenched.
—*Peele: The Love of King David and Fair Bethsabe.*

And from the same play:—

She that in chains of pearl and unicorn
Leads at her train the ancient golden world.

And one more:—

I have given you, forsooth, kisses in plenty and but few stripes.
If ever I have flogged you 'twas but with a peacock's tail.
—*Thomas More "To his sweetest children."*

The last quotation chimes with the compiler's taste for Chinese poetry (they give six translations by Mr. Waley, three by Mr. Soame Jenyns).

The extracts I have given suggest, I hope, the high intrinsic value of this collection. But it is interesting for another reason. The book is not anonymous; it represents the tastes, and therefore to some extent, the characters, of two very well known figures.

> . . . there is nothing more potent or better than this: when a man and a woman, sharing the same ideas about life, keep house together. It is a thing which causes pain to their enemies and pleasure to their friends. But only they themselves know what it really means.

This extract from the Odyssey can hardly fail to remind us of a fact not mentioned in this book: Miss Sackville-West and Mr. Nicolson are married to one another. In their preface they refer to their "somewhat different occupations in life," and their many admirers may well be tempted to allot responsibility for each extract. Which was marked by the singer of country toils and joys, which by the anti-Munich politician?

Let us try our hand:—

Settled in some secret nest
In calm leisure let me rest,
And far off the public stage
Pass away my silent age.

There is a whole galaxy of such poems in dispraise of public life, and it would be almost libellous to attribute their selection to one who has done such valuable service to the State as Mr. Nicolson. And here is a sonnet on "The Steam Threshing-Machine with the Straw-Carrier":—

Flush with the pond the lurid furnace burn'd
At eve, while smoke and vapour fill'd the yard;
The gloomy winter sky was dimly starr'd,
The fly-wheel with a mellow murmur turn'd;
While, ever rising on its mystic stair
In the dim light, from secret chambers borne,
The straw of harvest, sever'd from the corn,
Climb'd and fell over, in the murky air.
I thought of mind and matter, will and law,
And then of him, who set his stately seal
Of Roman words on all the forms he saw
Of old-world husbandry; *I* could but feel
With what a rich precision *he* would draw
The endless ladder, and the booming wheel!

Obviously it was the author of *The Land* who marked this anticipation of her own thoughts. But no sooner has one decided this than one notices that the author of the sonnet is Charles Tennyson Turner. And didn't Mr. Nicolson in his excellent book on Tennyson have a lot to say about the poet's brothers? And also a good deal about Virgil? This attribution game is not as simple as it seemed, and one realises why the compilers talked of their several tastes becoming curiously homogeneous. There are three quotations that Mr. Nicolson has acted on, even if he has not marked them:—

> It is not enough for a man to do the things that be good; but he must also have a care to do them with good grace.
>
> Fight all opinions contrary to truth, but let your weapons be patience, sweetness, and charity, for violence, besides injuring your own soul, injures the best cause.
>
> There is nothing disgraceful about work: it is laziness which is disgraceful.

The anthology is arranged in twelve *ikebanas*, one for each month. Sometimes a quotation depends for its interest upon the company it has been made to keep. Thus if you should open the book at page 95 you find at the top a quotation from Juvenal: "Nullam invenies quae parcat amanti"—"You will never find a woman who spares her lover"—one of those generalisations which are neither true nor even dimly interesting. What is it doing here? Go back to the bottom of the previous page, and you find "Amor che a nullo amato amar perdona"—"Love which to no loved one gives respite from loving." Then you see that Dante has developed from Juvenal a line that has great beauty and that sets one thinking. The compilers have achieved many such happy collocations.

They show a particular fondness for early Stuart poetry, but have searched many climates for their blossoms: we are offered du Bartas next to Marvell, Carducci between Po Chui and Langland, Lucretius between Baudelaire and Plato. The English 18th century offers some rare blooms: note some charming lines rather secretively attributed to "Mr. Warton"—I presume the Oxford professor and Laureate who occurs in "Eng. Lit." as a romantic revivalist.

This is indeed the beguiling sort of book that sets you searching your own shelves.

The Andalusian merchant, that returns,
Laden with cochineal and china dishes,
Reports in Spain how strangely Fogo burns
Amidst an ocean full of flying fishes . . .

Where and what, one begins by wondering, is Fogo? The dictionary reveals that cochineal comes chiefly from Mexico. But does the merchant bring china from there or from Cathay? And so one goes on, forgetting all about Fogo, which is one of the Cape Verde Islands. Such whets to inquisitiveness are among the many reasons why I confidently recommend as a Christmas present a book that so amply represents the gusto, the wide reading, the humour and the sensibility of its compilers.

RAYMOND MORTIMER

ANTI-AMERICAN PROPAGANDA

Report on the Russians. By W. L. WHITE. *Eyre and Spottiswoode.* 10s. 6d. *net.*

In America, any worker who had lost his food coupons could still live magnificently on unrationed foods. He could fill up with milk, egg, poultry, fish, bread and unlimited amounts of fresh fruit and vegetables.

Of course there was nothing like that in Russia when Mr. White went there in the early summer of '44. And it disgusted him. Everything was "shabby," his favourite adjective.

He spent six weeks there, as one of the companions of Mr. Eric Johnston, President of the United States Chamber of Commerce. Mr. White went from one banquet to another, from one conducted tour to another—in Europe, Siberia, and Central Asia, all in six weeks; ate all the lunches and dinners; sneered at them; sneered at everybody around him, including Eric Johnston, whom he makes to look a complete half-wit, with "his face frozen into a beatific smile." No less ridiculous, in White's description, is Johnston's assistant, O'Hara, and some of the American journalists who go with Johnston on his precious tour. As for the Russians, they are, on the whole, quite unspeakable. Here are a couple of samples of White's *Report on the Russians*:

> Now, of course, prostitution has been abolished in the Soviet Union. Woman's most precious gift is no longer to be had for money. But, friend, do you happen to have an extra quart of milk, or a bottle of vodka, a pound of pork, or a pack of cigarettes?

Having thus pontifically uttered the last word on the women of Russia, and their worship of Spam, he leaves it at that. For high-class reporting, one might also quote the following:

> There was no toilet paper, but this is also standard. . . . The natives get along nicely with *Pravda* or *Izvestia*, or, in an emergency, with *Red Star*. *War and the Working Class* . . . is not favoured, because it is printed on heavier, slick-coated paper.

The whole tone of the book may be gauged from quotations like these. It belongs, in fact, to that class of trashy amateur books on Russia which have infested the book market for the last 28 years. White's book would not be worth more than ten lines, were it not something of a political act, which has nothing to do with the faults or merits (if any) of the writing.

Through its extracts in *Reader's Digest*, of which White is an editor, and then through being a best-seller, *Report on the Russians* had a big effect in America and forms part of the big anti-Soviet drive.

Such is the greed for knowledge on Russia, and such is the case with which any supremely well-advertised book can sell. The book is, of course, not only well advertised, but also very inaccurately advertised. The British publishers have gone so far in imitating their American colleagues that they describe the book as actually "the First Authentic News from Inside Russia," and the author, we are told, "is one of the only two men who travelled freely through the Soviet Union during the war, went where he liked, and asked what questions he wanted." The other being Eric Johnston. Not even a reference to the four other correspondents attached to the trip!

And then—what were White's qualifications? None that we can discover. He knew strangely little of Russia before; and he does not seem to have had, when there, conversations with any of those "ordinary Russians" on whom he so sweepingly generalises throughout the book—except with an Intourist guide whom we are shown crushed to powder by Mr. White's brilliant and unanswerable dialectics in defence of democracy, capitalism and good living in America. What, indeed, could the poor girl say in reply to the first quotation in this review? What would you or I say, poor half-starved British that we are?

The fact that White was on his lightning tour through Russia on the eve of the gigantic offensive which was to sweep the Red Army half-way into Poland and Hungary, and, eventually, into Vienna and Berlin is the one fact which the book manages completely to omit. The tremendous organisation, and human endeavour and enthusiasm behind this victory simply aren't there, as far as White is concerned. Every Russian war factory is either "sloppy" or "inefficient," or "incredibly dirty"—even Magnitogorsk, which greatly impressed even the highly critical British Iron and Steel Delegation. How the Russians won the war remains a complete mystery, unless it was American help.

There is hardly a controversial question in the book that is not somehow twisted, distorted, or exaggerated so that the Russians may be put in the wrong. If Stalin pays warm tribute to Allied help, then, to the "ordinary Russian" (whom White knows so well) it is "one of those perfunctory gestures which all statesmen occasionally make." In fact, White has a ready explanation for everything. Katyn Forest? Oh, yes, White must be scrupulously objective. He will state both cases. Only he states the German case fully, and the Russian case as patchily as possible.

Johnston and several of White's other companions have repudiated the book as an obvious stunt. But there must be a public for it in this country too, or it wouldn't be published. Yet, upon many, it will have the effect of anti-American, rather than anti-Russian propaganda. We don't like the guy who sneers at everything, because the same thing is always bigger or better or richer in America. And the orange juice he clamoured for at breakfast in Moscow—well, there ain't none in London neither.

J. WILSON

CHILDREN'S BOOKS

Heritage. By HILDA K. F. GULL. *Macmillan.* 10s. 6d.

The Demon Bowler and other Talks to Schoolboys. By NORMAN PERCIVAL. *Skeffington.* 5s.

Holly Hotel. By ELISABETH KYLE. *Peter Davies.* 8s. 6d.

Problem Party. By M. E. ATKINSON. *Lane.* 8s. 6d.

A Penny for the Guy. By CLARE COLLAS. Illustrated by Dod Proctor, R.A. *Peter Davies.* 8s. 6d.

The Horse from India. By BRIAN FAIRFAX-LUCY. *Frederick Muller.* 6s.

John and Mary's Youth Club. By GRACE JAMES. *Frederick Muller.* 6s.

Canadian Magic. By MARY F. MOORE. *Sylvan Press.* 7s. 6d.

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Ferry the Fearless. By CAROLA OMAN.

Jehan of the Ready Fists. By MAGDALEN KING-HALL. *Puffin Story Books. 9d. each.*

Entertainment, instruction, moral improvement—what are the authors of modern children's books aiming at when they sit down to write? It seems that this year the accent is on entertainment. The war is over, let the children enjoy themselves! More pantomimes are running, *Peter Pan* is fast booking up, and in the book world there is a cheerful rocket-like explosion of stories of pure adventure, old-fashioned fun, witches, fairies and fantasy. Gone are the tedious descriptions of those painfully useful and conscientious children who were for ever boiling kettles and washing up; as if children, like everyone else during these last years, had not had enough of such things, or ever wanted to hear them mentioned again!

However, to show that all writers for children are not so well-intentioned and that some seem to prefer Guilt and Pain as an object, here are one or two warning quotations: In the handsomely produced *Heritage* the children are talking one day of dragons and Grannie says:

"'All the same we all have our own private dragons to fight!'

"'*Private* dragons, Grannie—whatever do you mean?'

"'I was thinking of temptations, Angela.'"

Later on Angela wonders if her horse should be allowed a lump of sugar on Good Friday. "'Yes,' said Grandfather, 'they haven't the use of reason, so never sinned against their Creator as we have done.'"

The author of *The Demon Bowler* states in his preface that his "Talks to Schoolboys" are "in no sense of the word what I have often heard called pie-jaws." Let the reader beware! That, of course, is exactly what they are. The Demon Bowler is the Devil, and the Boy stands ever at the wicket defending the three stumps of Honour, Self-respect and Purity. "Don't let that devil's fast ball get you, old chaps!" cries Mr. Percival.

And now for Pleasure: Elisabeth Kyle and M. E. Atkinson are here again, each with a full-length novel of some detective interest (for ages 9–14). Miss Kyle has never again risen to the heights of *Vanishing Island*, but she always constructs a good plot, and her characters and dialogues are lively. In *Holly Hotel* the scene is again Scotland, and the theme concerns a search for a lost manuscript of great literary and historic value. But what has happened to M. E. Atkinson? Ever since the aristocracy began to creep into her novels (first a boy baronet and now the daughters of a countess) adventure has been creeping out. *Problem Party* has a pitifully thin plot, all awash with diffused hero-worship and snobbery and tedious descriptions of party frocks. Two unusual books can be recommended for children with special tastes. For the aspiring artist (preferably a girl of 11 to 15) *A Penny for the Guy* presents a Cinderella story of a girl genius from the slums, whose dazzling success will provoke day-dreams and spur ambition. *The Horse from India* (9–14) is about a boy who runs away from school to be a jockey. It is well written, and combines a real knowledge of horses and riding with detective interest and a touch of the supernatural. Grace James's John and Mary are old favourites, and *John and Mary's Youth Club* (8–12) would please any domestic little girls who like a cosy humdrum background decorated with pink knitting, soap-suds and apple dumplings—though possibly even they might find the new volume a trifle uneventful. *Canadian Magic* (10–15) does not aim at pure entertainment, but dishes out something in the manner of *Puck of Pook's Hill*, though less elegantly, chunks of history between slices of fiction. All children enjoy information about subjects that interest them, but on the whole they prefer it straight. And the print is too small.

For rather younger children (6–10) there is a good selection of tales of imagination. Best of this group are *Little Reuben and the Mermaids* and *The Magic Bedknob*. Richard Strachey is a born writer for children and admirers of last year's *Little Reuben Stories* will find the new volume just as good. It is a relief, too, for the parent who reads aloud to find a book so well and effortlessly written, and in which humour and a certain poetic quality are combined. *The Magic Bedknob* is impregnated with imagination of the Nesbit brand, and has an excellent character in the shape of a conventional village spinster who is learning to be a witch. Other good short stories are *The Sky Apple*, fairy tales by an inventive writer, well soaked, I should guess, in the collections of Andrew Lang; *Beyond The Clapping Mountains*, Eskimo tales of simple Æsopian charm about geese, owls and foxes; and *The Turnings of the Shrew* in which more sophisticated creatures wear clothes, float in punts, and play Bach on the piano. Each story in this volume ends soporifically with its animal hero dropping asleep; they are intended to be administered "one at bed-time."

Then the admirable Puffins: of these I like best *Marvellous Models*, in which figure famous models from the Radio Robot of Olympia to the miniature railway with which the Maharajah of Gwalior used to circulate the drinks on his dining-table. Instructions for making simpler models follow. *Woodworking for Children* and *A Book of Swimming* are both excellently practical, and for information in its best form, undisguised and alluring, there are *Wonders of Animal Life*, *Rebuilding London*, *Our Horses*, and *The Story of China*. The Puffin Story Books also have four new numbers, and it is impossible to get more and better reading for ninepence. *Afke's Ten* is a translation of a Dutch classic corresponding to *Little Women*; *Flaxen Braids*, the true story of a Swedish family; *Ferry The Fearless* and *Jehan of the Ready Fists*, are both stories of the Crusades.

Lastly here are a few suggestions of books which, although written for adults, will be enjoyed (if they can be picked up) by children of varying ages from 10 to 16:—

CONAN DOYLE. *The Sherlock Holmes* Books
CHESTERTON. The *Father Brown* Stories.
SOMERVILLE AND ROSS. The *Irish R.M.* Books.
COLLINS. *The Moonstone* and *The Woman in White.*
JEROME. *Three Men in a Boat.*
FALKNER. *Moonfleet.*
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And (for older girls) Jane Austen, Miss Ferrier, Charlotte Brontë.

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Escape from the Zoo. By RICHARD PARKER. Illus. by BIRO. *Sylvan Press.* 7s. 6d.
A Ring and a Riddle. By M. ILIN and E. SEGAL. *Hutchinson.* 4s. 6d.
The Best Adventure. By NORMAN DALE. Illus. by DIANA JOHN. *John Lane.* 6s.
Hermit in the Hills. By DAVID SEVERN. Illus. By KIDDELL-MONROE. *John Lane.* 7s. 6d.
Mary Plain's Big Adventure. By GWYNEDD RAE. Illus. by IRENE WILLIAMSON. *Routledge.* 5s.
Buttercup Fairy. By CAM. *Lane.* 5s.
Stars and Primroses. By M. C. GREEN. *Lane.* 6s.
The Mulberry Bush. By ELEANOR FARJEON. Illus. by ISOBEL and JOHN MARTIN-SALE. *Michael Joseph.* 5s.

The object, of course, is to produce a children's book that pleases the parent. On this principle I've thrown out several shiny, lurid, messy volumes of ill-drawn gnomes, Woolworth fairies, Wardour Street mice, and that terrible menagerie of Ye Olde Animals dressed in the fashion of Central European peasants of a hundred years ago. The persistence of the peasant animal in commercial illustration is a strange social phenomenon; and so is the taste for bad housing. In a hundred years' time, this cult of dilapidation in children's books will look like propaganda and not a legacy from the Black Forest, a debased Germanism for the child of the fake Tudor suburb. This fashion has its maudlin charm, but I notice it is becoming decadent. Gnomes are becoming caricatures. The grotesque creatures, the cobblers and carpenters, and so on, look as though they are doped and ill. Dyspepsia has ringed the eyes of the once eupeptic little folk; fairies, on the other hand, are too well-fed; mice are slapdash, cats and dogs are sketchy. The break with convention has introduced a disastrous and raddled impressionism. My notion is that the cheap trash is better done than the expensive trash.

Children like anything, but they prefer the carefully drawn animal to the impression. Biro's pictures of Zoo animals in Richard Parker's *Escape from the Zoo* are excellent. The story will do for children of 6 to 9, I suppose. *A Ring and a Riddle* is translated from the Russian, an amusing fairy story for quick young rationalists. The illustrations are poor, but the story is good for the ingenious, guessing kind of child. *The Best Adventure* is a sequel to *Secret Service*, and is the story of two boys and a mysterious cave. It has a local map, the tale runs in a lively manner, and it discreetly avoids the blood-thirsty. I was struck by the dialogue; it is unusually good. This and *Hermit in the Hills* is for the 9 to 12's; but the latter is for the nice sheltered child, the earnest ones who take their holidays plainly but expensively in Wales—car, caravan and horse—among surprisingly obliging Welsh farmers. The bookish child who likes woodcuts, scenery, picnics, climbing, and who expects some instruction in country ways, ought to have this story. It will disappoint those who want action. *Mary Plain's Big Adventure* comes into the same age group. Mary is parachuted and arrives in a South Sea Island. There's a note of coy family condescension in this story; but there is a vast school of children's books like this, and no one seems to mind. The pictures in this book are good. *Buttercup Fairy*, for young children, went down well in my family, because it was luscious to the point of vulgarity and has a delightful incident in which a naked, nauseous little cherub falls bottom first on a hedgehog; and I was told that the fairy in this book was the real thing. You judge, not by the etherial quality, but by the expensive look of the wings. Finally, there are two volumes of poems and rhymes. *Stars and Primroses* is an excellent collection of poems—T. S. Eliot, John Clare, Yeats, William Longland, Hardy are among the names—prettily, too prettily presented. The selection of poems is unusual and the John Clare is a beauty. *The Mulberry Bush* contains Eleanor Farjeon's own rhymes about children's games. They are pleasantly direct, unsentimental and indeed the work of one gifted in this genre.

V. S. PRITCHETT

PIONEER ARCHITECT

An Autobiography. By FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT. *Faber and Faber.* 35s.

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries there were in the United States many pioneers, venturesome, independent and single-minded. The majority were materialists, devoted chiefly to money-making and hardly ever to an art. In Frank Lloyd Wright we have the exception and his autobiography is important to anyone interested in architecture and its more recent trends; for he can be called the Father of Functionalists. His literary style, while it expresses his vitality and forceful character, is declamatory and verbose: the account of his life and work is mixed up with theory and philosophy, neither profound nor interesting. The book is well illustrated with photographs of his buildings, but has no plans or drawings; and it would be an advantage to see a portrait of the author.

Wright's virtues and defects as an artist owe much to his antecedents and upbringing. His mother, the daughter of a Welsh Unitarian hat-maker and preacher who had settled in Wisconsin, married a musician-minister. He subsequently deserted his family, and Wright got little from his father except a love of music, particularly of Bach, painfully acquired while pumping the church organ. But his mother, even before he was born, intended him to be an architect: she did all that she could to encourage a love of beauty and instilled an integrity, which in after life enabled him to carry out his ideas against opposition and indifference. At an early age he was put to work on his uncle's farm. Later he studied engineering at the University of Wisconsin. In 1887 he left for Chicago, thirsting for more architectural knowledge and not wishing to tax further his mother's small resources. Here there was still no opportunity to see the works of art of the past, nor did Wright wish to. In fact he later refused a chance to go to the Beaux-Arts. Europe might have deflected the course of a weaker character, but I wonder whether Paris would not have mellowed Wright's style.

In 1887 Louis Sullivan was one of the leading architects in the States, producing clean, straightforward business buildings, far in advance of the hybrid styles of the period. He inspired a school, soon to be swamped by the "Beaux-Arts Classic" which swept over America after the Chicago Fair of 1893. Brilliantly as this was used by such exponents as McKim, it had a disastrous and stultifying effect on architecture everywhere. Wright, who worked with Sullivan for several years and learnt a lot from him, was almost the only American architect to continue in a free manner, disregarding fashions and styles. His influence in America was for a long time negligible, but it soon affected Continental architects, chiefly German and Dutch. This lead from America helped to solidify the slithery and then fashionable *Art Nouveau* into the "Modern" style, later to return to the States under the banner of Mendelsohn and Gropius.

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and deep overhanging eaves, they are some of his most satisfactory buildings. The scanty illustrations of the early interiors show less of the restlessness and uncosy quaintness that appear later. But even at that time nothing was left to the client. This despised individual must take all from the architect, down to the last cushion and ornament: there are amusing groans from Wright when the client, impoverished by the ultimate cost of the building, is obliged to retain his old furniture. "Very few of the houses, therefore, were anything but painful to me after the clients brought in their belongings." One can sympathise with both sides, and it is important, in estimating the achievement, to remember Middle Western taste at that time, and to compare Wright's early works with the turreted, gabled, pinchbeck Gothic then prevalent. They then appear a remarkable revelation. It is not possible to judge the internal arrangements, since no plans are given, but there are space and light, some will think at the expense of privacy and comfort. Unity between garden and house was an objective sought by the architect with ever-increasing enthusiasm, till in the examples built during the last ten years, the house spreads poised almost as a natural outcrop, and in one case is built over a torrent. The naked brick and stone walls of the interior suggest that the house has been turned inside out.

From 1906, when Wright became interested in Japanese prints, the influence of Japan grows noticeable. It was intensified during the years between 1916 and 1920 when his great achievement, the Imperial Hotel at Tokio, was built. In this remarkable building, though there is little direct stylistic reference, a strong local feeling is combined with a Western strength and durability. The hotel was the only important building to withstand the earthquake of 1923, thus justifying its revolutionary construction and the wrangles over cost and delay which taxed the architect's spirit during the four years of building.

A stormy and often tragic private life forms the background. Wright married when about twenty, and quickly produced six children. Other wives follow, leading to legal and financial complications with adherent publicity, affecting work and reputation. Taliesin, his country home and work-place, was twice burned—once by a mad servant, who also murdered seven inmates. In spite of everything Wright persisted, his inventiveness winning for him an increasing reputation abroad, and eventually in America.

Of the buildings illustrated in this book those designed for business purposes are the most satisfying; they are all too few, for they have an elegance which is denied to most of the houses. Revolutionary architecture is more suitable for buildings whose functions have been recently developed than for those devoted to the ordinary functions of living, which have not essentially changed. Most people are not prepared to divorce themselves entirely from tradition: they want a home into which they can fit their inherited possessions, a simple modern building which will enhance and not detract from the beauty of pictures both old and new. A Matisse or a Klee, if indeed you could find a place to put it, would look unhappy in most of these nightmare interiors of Wright's, with their broken wall-surfaces, uneven ceilings, ponderous fireplaces and angular furniture; spaces completely lacking in repose and refinement.

However much one may dislike certain aspects of his work, there is no doubt that Wright is a great constructor and inventor, uncompromising in his insistence on what might be called truthful building. This he finds in frankness of construction and in exploiting the materials and advantages of a machine-age. He greatly assisted the necessary and healthy reaction against nineteenth-century antiquarianism and theatricality and in discrediting what is superfluous and bogus. Others will have to develop his intentions and realise them in works of art.

GEDDES HYSLOP

NEW NOVELS

The House in Clewe Street. By MARY LAVIN. *Michael Joseph.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

Dead Ground. By HOWARD CLEWES. *Bodley Head.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

The White Rock. By DENYS VAL BAKER. *Sylvan Press.* 9*s.* 6*d.*

Miss Mary Lavin has already shown herself, in *Tales from Bective Bridge* and *The Long Ago*, to be a true artist in the short story. She is a master of realistic comedy and of fantasy; she uses them separately with equal skill, and she has a fine discernment of where the one may be allowed to extend into the other. *The House in Clewe Street* is not a short story. With ill-concealed pride, its publishers tell us that its two hundred and thirty-seven thousand words, compressed here into four hundred and sixty pages, would in peace time have occupied one thousand and fifty-six. They would even then have left one with an unsatisfied curiosity as to the point of the book. It shows vast endeavour, patience, and at times a considerable artistry, and Miss Lavin's gift of creating certain types of character is still remarkable; but it is as if she has been compelled to create "minor" characters of great realism and has been unable to make them participate in any satisfying action. She has therefore—and inevitably—added "major" characters and made them protagonists in a conventional, melodramatic, old-fashioned plot. The minor characters—who hold the stage completely for the first ninety pages (two hundred and seven in more spacious days) and play a considerable part in the later ones—are drawn in minute and careful detail. The major characters, and their actions, are perforce given prodigious space. But they are never more interesting than the supposedly smaller figures, and the long prelude to the book, before the real protagonists appear, is by far its best part. The hero is a shy, undetermined youth named Gabriel, and the prelude concerns his parents and grandparents, the principal property-owners in the small Irish town which Miss Lavin calls Castlerampart. All that happens to them could have been told between the lines of the main story, and as one penetrates deeper into this, it begins to seem possible that their earlier life could have safely been omitted completely. Nevertheless it is an appetising beginning, and it brings out Miss Lavin at her best; Clewe Street, and the fields and ruins beyond it, and the house itself, are beautifully created.

They, together with Gabriel's aunts and grandfather, are obviously more real to Miss Lavin than Gabriel himself; or than Onny, the servant-girl who becomes his mistress and runs away with him to a rather unbelievable Bohemian corner of Dublin; than Sylvester, Gabriel's artistic friend, who has yellow eyes when he first appears, blue ones on page 196 (Old Style: page 451) and yellow ones again at the end; or than Helen, the good girl with whom Gabriel later falls in love. There is a doomful inevitability about the way Onny and Gabriel become each other's undoing; but it is inevitable only because it has happened in books before (in the first part of *Jude the Obscure*, for example). One would not accuse Miss Lavin of a wish to deceive the reader; but in this enormous plethora of words it seems that she has been at great pains to deceive herself as to the worth of her subject. This is particularly

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evident in the final pages of the book, which are unusually stilted in action and wooden in dialogue, and give an impression that the author is trying to convince herself against her own normally excellent judgment. The last scene, when Onny has died after an abortion, and Gabriel, watching the early morning panorama of Dublin from the Phœnix Park, feels himself suddenly filled with new courage, is an amazing succession of banalities. It must be added that there are certain things in *The House in Clewe Street* which confirm one's respect for Miss Lavin's powers; the funeral scene (always to be expected in Irish novels) is brilliantly comic; there is a good moment when Gabriel, hiding at night outside Onny's house, hears her mother and sister talking of her disappearance; there is another when Onny describes the visit of Gabriel's aunts to Dublin. These show Miss Lavin at her best. But her next novel will be awaited with apprehension as well as pleasure.

Dead Ground is a short, brisk and accomplished novel about that period of the war when we were all, in various positions—or postures, according to our jobs—waiting for a German invasion. "Dead Ground" is an Army term: it is any part of a landscape which you cannot see between yourself and your target. The centre-piece of Mr. Clewes's novel is an old merchant-ship in a tiny northern harbour-village called Imbleness. Thwaite, its ageing captain, has been put on shore-duty by the Navy, and his ship is about to be taken over by the Army; when the invasion comes, the ship is to be used as a block-ship and sunk across the harbour-mouth. The captain is filled with hate for this idea, and the main action of the story arises from his adamant refusal to fall in with the Army's plans. When they try to fill his ship with bricks and rubble he throws the lot into the sea; he refuses to let the "other ranks" come on board, and finally moves the ship out into the middle of the harbour, from which point of vantage he hurls bottles at the Adjutant of the Army group.

The book is not merely slapstick; concurrent with the comedy there are tragedies, principally the captain's relations with his gross, unfaithful wife. After a grotesquely horrible scene with her—it is one of the best passages in the book—he decides to take his ship out to sea, through the minefields, in the dark. He does so; and with great adroitness and what seems nowadays to be a kind of boldness, Mr. Clewes uses this night to make all the elements of his story converge. He has not scorned coincidence, and this gives an unusual freshness and vitality to his climax. His comedy is excellent. There is an extremely well-done scene in the dark, when the Adjutant attempts to board the ship with a party of men. The ship has already gone. He and the men row round the empty harbour, inexpert and sick, and are finally shot at by their own guards. There is a charming astringency, like that of W. W. Jacobs, about both incident and dialogue.

"Humphries!" said the Adjutant.

"Yes, sir?"

"You're doing nothing. Bail."

"What with, sir?" the soldier asked wretchedly.

"Anything. Improvise, man. Use your helmet."

The soldier took off his helmet and scooped blindly in the bilge and tossed the water over the side.

"Are you throwing that at me?" the Adjutant demanded immediately.

The form of the book is slightly marred by a court-martial scene after the climax, which has little relation to the rest and appears to have been tacked on simply as a demonstration of the author's virtuosity in Army tragi-comedy. It is the end of Mr. Clewes's second novel; it would have made an admirable beginning to a third.

The White Rock is a melodrama about childhood. It is about the life of a motherless little boy and his elder sister at the seaside, and this means that it recalls Mr. L. P. Hartley's recent novel, *The Shrimp and the Anemone*, which was about the seaside life of a motherless little girl and her younger brother. Mr. Hartley's book was a masterpiece, and *The White Rock* is something less than that; but it is sensitive and it holds the attention. It is a sombre story, and its happy ending is only happy in the dubious sense that the tragic element has been violently removed. The central characters are the little boy, Powys, and his sister, Margiad, who almost lures him to his death; but the story reaches out beyond its rather strained details to something fundamental in children's experience. The central theme is, in fact, Powys's struggle between the growth of his affection for his father, and his early loyalty to Margiad, a loyalty she impresses on him so fiercely that it forms a nexus of guilt and unhappiness in him. This is only one particular example of the common way in which a child's soul becomes the playground—or the battlefield—where the emotions of his elders forever echo. It is because Mr. Baker's book reminds us of a universal fact, that it grips us more than a mere anecdotal or reminiscent picture of childhood might; for the same reasons it disarms censure of its crudities. HENRY REED

Week-end Competitions

No. 829

Set by W.R.

Six guineas are offered for an original epithalamium in not more than eighteen lines. Entries by December 28th.

RESULT OF COMPETITION NO. 826

Set by Raymond Mortimer

Prizes of six guineas are offered for the best English versions of the following lines. Competitors may take any liberty they think fit in order to produce an equivalent effect.

Un corbeau devant moi croasse;
Une ombre offusque mes regards;
Deux belettes et deux renards
Traversent l'endroit où je passe;
Les pieds faillent à mon cheval,
Mon laquais tombe du haut mal;
J'entends craqueter le tonnerre;
Un esprit se présente à moi;
J'ois Charon qui m'appelle à soi;
Je vois le centre de la terre.

Ce ruisseau remonte en sa source;
Un boeuf gravit sur un clocher;
Le sang coule de ce rocher;
Un aspic s'acouple d'une ourse;
Sur le haut d'une vieille tour
Un serpent déchire un vautour;
Le feu brûle dedans la glace,
Le soleil est devenu noir;
Je vois la lune qui va choir;
Cet arbre est sorti de sa place.

Report by Raymond Mortimer

Sir Robert Witt sent, with an excellent version, several guesses, one of them correct, at the authorship of the lines. They are by Théodore de Viau (1596–1626), and I am gratified to find that so many competitors were, like myself, fascinated by their romantic extravagance—a quality comparatively rare in French poetry before the 19th century and peculiarly susceptible to translation into English. Ingeniously modernised versions came from N. P. Meadway, J. R Till, The Office Boy and Tom o' Bedlam. Others of the 120 entries that I had to set aside with special regret were those of William Bliss, V. B., G. J. Blundell, Coska, G. D. Hobson, Leslie Johnson, Allan M. Laing, Maurice Palmer, Alan Russell, Ella Stevens, W. J. Strachan, G. de V., and Mollie Whittemore—all of which were eminently print-

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worthy. I was then left with six entries, among which I divide the prizes.

The dark wings beat across my eyes,
Coughing their hollow carrion cries;
Ferret and fox, on velvet feet,
Slip in swift silence through the street;
My stallion stumbles on the stone;
My groom has fallen, and alone
I hear the cloudrack split, and see
The lightning ghost that seeks for me;
My name is echoed in a tomb,
Where glows the earth's devouring womb.

The river leaps from sea to spring;
The cattle to the steeple cling;
The cliff pours blood, and in the dust
A bear exhausts a python's lust;
On the high tower above the moat
A viper tears an eagle's throat;
Beneath the ice the fierce flames run,
While midnight purple dyes the sun;
I see the moon crash to her doom;
A tree treads softly through the gloom.

P. BAGGALLAY

There's a croaking crow ahead;
When I look the light is black;
Two foxes on the track;
Two weasels where I tread.
My horse is down and will not rise;
In a fit my lacquey lies;
I hear the crackling thunder roar;
A spirit meets me in the dark;
Charon calls me to his barque;
I see into the earth's core.

Up the hill this river hies;
An ox has climbed the parish clock;
Blood is flowing from this rock;
Lion mates with cockatrice;
On the tower old and high
A serpent sucks a vulture dry;
Ice has fire flaming through;
The sun is covered with a pall;
I see the moon about to fall;
This tree has moved from where it grew.

F. C. C.

Shadows past which I may not peer—
Weasel and fox, by two, by two,
Pad o'er the spot I must pass through—
A raven croaking in my ear.
My charger's feet stumble and tire,
An epilepsy rends my squire.
Before me apparitions rise;
I hear the crackling thunder roll
And Charon summoning my soul;
The centre opes before my eyes.

Yon stream runs backward: here an ox
A steeple climbs; there see an asp
A bear mixogamously clasp.
Blood's welling forth from yonder rocks.
Deep in the ice hot fire still burns;
The sickly sun to blackness turns;
The moon's a star about to shoot.
Upon a tower's ancient height.
Snake vulture rends in deadly fight.
This tree hath quit his native root.

R. J. P. HEWISON

Crow in my face squawking,
Dust in my eyes seeping,
Foxes and stoats creeping
Cumber my feet walking,
Leading a lamed horse,
Seeking my lost wits,
Stifling by main force
One of my man's fits.
Overhead sky breaking,
Over me stored thunder,
Ushers a ghost appalling . . .
Voices of hell calling,
Yank me where down under
I can see Earth quaking.

Upstream the beck rippling . . .
Oxen climb church towers,
Blood from the rocks showers,
Snakes lie with bears coupling . . .
High where the gargoyle juts,
Cobra tears hawk's guts . . .
Ice bursts in flame leaping,
Out of sky on its back
Moon pitches . . . sun goes black . . .
Trees are like men creeping.

RONALD MASON

A raven croaked. There fell a mist
To blind the gaze. A-prowl for prey
Weazels and foxes whined and hissed
Over the doubtful way.

My steed nigh fell. My squire, in awe,
With mouth a-foam shrieked in my rear
Till thunder silenced him. I saw
A ghostly shape appear

That beckoned me. I heard the hoarse
Salute of Charon, scanned earth's core,
Where rivers backward to their source
Ran downward with a roar.

An ox rose to a steeple-vane.
Blood ran from stone. An adder clung
To mate a bear. There bled a-main
A vulture viper-stung.

Flames burned in ice. The darkened sun
Was like a cinder on the sky.
The moon was dead. Trees, one by one,
On feet of wool went by.

WILLY TADPOLE

When the moone curves from her course;
Or an oxe a steeple scales;
When a stream flows to its source;
Ice on flick'ring fire prevailes;
When thou see'st a boulder bleeding;
Or a cat the Bible reading;
Take care
What thou wilt dare;
Portentes like these are not faire.

If a weazell, all alone,
Cross thy path from left to right;
Or when midnight spirits mone,
And when shadows cloude thy sight;
When thou see'st a snake devouring
Eagles, up on ruins towering;
Take heed;
For thou wilt need
Guard thyself in word and deed.

When the sunne's displeasur'd face,
Witches' alchymie makes blacke;
Or a tree walkes from its place;
When thou spiest Hell through a cracke,
And hear'st hoary Charon calling;
When thy horse can't stop from falling;
Then know,
That downe below
As above, these omens show.

When an adder gets with childe,
'Gainst the laws of God, a beare;
Or when on an evening milde
Lightning crackles in the aire;
When the raven croaks his warning,
And the sky is red at morning;
Then praye,
Both Night and daye,
These signes come no more thy way.

FRANCIS WELKIN

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WOLSEY HALL, OXFORD

Appointments Vacant

None of the vacancies in these columns relates to a man between 18 and 50 inclusive or a woman between 18 and 40 inclusive unless he or she is excepted from the provision of the Control of Engagement Order, 1945, or the vacancy is for employment excepted from the provisions of that Order.

CIVIL Service Commission. Civil Service Commissioners, at request of Foreign Office, invite applics. for combined post of Director of Research Dept. and Librarian and Keeper of Papers at F.O. Duties will include, besides usual work of a Librarian, preparation of memoranda on historical events, Treaty questions, etc., and initiation and supervision of important historical research. Holder, who should be a capable administrator, will be link between Foreign Office and learned societies and individuals. Only persons with highest qualifics. pref. familiar with admin. of Libraries should apply. Salary rising to £1,500 p.a. for a really suitable candidate with pension rights and current war bonus. Applics. made by letter, giving full details of age, career and qualifics., to Secretary, Civil Service Commission, Burlington Gardens, London, W.1, by December 31st; envelope should be marked "L" in top left-hand corner.

KENT Educ. Ctee. Wanted, in January, full time gardening instructress for duties, which will include advisory visits and instruction to Women's Institutes, Produce Guilds, etc., and visits to school gardens. Instructress appointed will be attached to County Technical School for Girls, Fort Pitt, Chatham, where she will be reqd. to undertake some practical gardening instruction. Candids. must have qualifics. in horticulture and should have had practical exp. and be able to give practical instruction in gardening to teachers and students. Salary in accordance with new Burnham Scale. Applics. must be made by December 31st, on forms to be obtained from County Educ. Officer, Springfield, Maidstone.

KENT Educ. Ctee. Kent Youth Ctee. Applics. invited from suitably qualified women for appointment as warden of Dartford Miskin Road Girls' Youth Centre. Warden required to devote whole of her time to work of Centre or to such other duties in connexion with Service of Youth as may be assigned to her by Ctee. Salary £250 rising by increments of £10 to £300 p.a. plus a temporary war addition. Commencing salary according to qualifics. and exp. Application forms from County Educ. Officer, Springfield, Maidstone, to whom completed forms should be submitted by December 31st.

B.B.C. invites applics. from women only for post of Secretary in the Dutch Section of European Division. Candids. must have perfect Dutch and good English; typing essent. and shorthand would be an advantage. Work involves general office routine, some translation from Dutch into English and accurate attention to details. Applics. with details of age and exp. to Appointments Officer, Broadcasting House, London, W.1, and must be received by Dec. 22nd. Mark envelopes "Dutch Secretary."

B.B.C. invites applics. from men and women, British only, for post of Script Writer in European Productions Dept. Work includes writing of feature scripts for broadcasting in English service, and preparation of basic programme scripts for translation in other European languages. Candidates should have a good knowledge of Europe, European culture, and international affairs. Exp. in writing essent., and exp. in writing for microphone and a knowledge of foreign languages would be considered an advantage. Salary max. £600, rising to £800 plus Cost of Living Bonus £44 4s. and Family Allowances. Appointment to unestablished staff; entry to permanent staff subject to later consideration. Applics. with details of age and exp. to Appointments Officer, Broadcasting House, London, W.1. by Dec. 22nd. Mark env. "Script Writer."

THE Elizabeth Fry Approved Hostel for girls on probation, req. Superintendent-Secretary. Exp. with difficult girls necessary. Salary from £200 rising to £250. Applics. to Chairman Elizabeth Fry Hostel, 18 Highbury Terrace, London, N.5. by January 1st.

CLUB Leaders & Assistants reqd. by Y.W.C.A. of Gt. Britain, for centres serving all ages. Applics. expected to take full Y.W.C.A. training. For women with relevant exp. shorter courses are arranged. Salaries: Assistants, £200–£220 non-res. Leaders in charge, £220–£250 non-res. Possibilities of promotion to local admin. posts. Salary £250–£300 non-res. Apply: Personal Secretary, Y.W.C.A., National Offices, Gt. Russell St., London, W.C.1.

Appointments—continued

APPLICS. invited for post of Research Associate in the National Institute of Economics and Social Research. Candidates should have some training in Econs. and Statistics and, if possible, exp. of research work on econ. problems. Stipend from £600 to £1,000 a year, according to qualifics. and exp.: appointment will be, in first instance, for 2 years and will carry membership of F.S.S.U.—Applics. to Secretary, 53, Romney St., Westminster, S.W.1.

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COUNTY Borough of Ipswich Educ. Ctee. Applics. are invited from men and women for newly-created post of Organiser for Adult Educ. Ctee. have in mind not so much a person with high academic qualifics. as one able to meet adult groups on their own ground, ready to co-ordinate and foster a spirit of co-op. and goodwill. Salary offered is £342 by annual increments of £12 to £540, incl. of war bonus, commencing figure to be fixed according to exp. Post will be subject to Local Government Superan. Act. Applic. by letter (no forms issued) to J. T. Hill, Chief Educ. Officer, Educ. Dept., 17 Tower St., Ipswich, by December 31st accompanied by 3 recent testimonials.

GLASGOW and Dist. Co-Op. Conference Assoc. Wanted: Organising Secretary and Treasurer. Applics. for this post must possess a knowledge and have exp. of Co-op. Movement in its Trading, Educ. and Political aspects including exp. in admin. and a knowledge of Co-op. Accountancy. Sal. £400 p.a., increasing to £450 max., by annual increments of £10 with War Bonus of £63 14s. p.a. Superannuation Scheme. Applic. forms (from Secretary of Assoc., 71 Kingston St., Glasgow, C.5) must be returned by 29th December.

REQUIRED, as soon as possible, full-time Club Leader (men/women) for (1) Walton, (2) Esher. Salary: Men, £300 x £10/£15—£400 p.a. Women: £250 x £10/£15—£350 p.a. In addition full-time Youth organisers (men/women) for (1) Esher, (2) Reigate and surrounding area. Salary: Men, £450 x £20—£550 p.a. Women: £350 x £20—£450 p.a. Appointments for 2 years in first instance. Conditions and applic. forms from Chief Educ. Officer, County Hall, Kingston-upon-Thames.

DISTRICT Superintendents, men/women, required for active Temperance Work, various parts of England. Applics. who must be total abstainers and with exp. of public speaking and organising, should write first for applic. form to General Secretary, The United Kingdom Alliance, 12 Caxton St., S.W.1.

TRAINING Organiser over 25 reqd. by Scottish Girls' Training Corps. Camping exp. desirable. Salary in accordance with qualifics. and exp. Scale £300–£400. Application forms obtainable from Organising Secretary, 51 Queen St., Edinburgh, 2.

COOK-caterer, exp. essent., reqd. for Herefordshire residential nursery school. 40 children and staff. Salary Hetherington scale. Mother with child between 2–5 welcd. Pleasant warm house. Partics. training & exp. to Secretary, Priestley Nurseries, 92 Ebury St., S.W.1.

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SCIENCE and Maths. master to teach physics, chemistry and maths. to Matric. standard. Burnham scale. Apply Headmaster, Whittingehame College (of Brighton), Edwinsford Mansion, Llandilo, Carms.

SWARTHMORE Educ. Settlement, Leeds. Applics. invited for post of Warden (full-time; non-resid.). Exp. Adult Educ. and Univ. degree essent. For further information apply Hon. Sec., Swarthmore Settlement, Woodhouse Sq., Leeds 3. Closing date Dec. 31st.

YOUNG man or woman wanted, interested prog. educ. communal life, small co-ed. school. Domestic help but some teaching if desired. Partics. and photo to Freemount, Bacton, Hereford.

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MISTRESS wanted Jan. for class of 20 children, 6–7, resid. or non-resid. Sal. according to exp. Apply Headmistress, Guildhouse School, Carbone Hill, Cuffley, Herts.

MARRIED couple (35–50), wife good cook, husband caretaker, to form nucleus of domestic staff at small Industrial Rehabilitation Centre (25 beds), pleasant Northamptonshire village. Good living condits. Sal. etc., according to exp. and qualifics. Write Med. Officer, Stewarts & Lloyds, Ltd., Corby, Northants.

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SUB-Editress reqd. by London medical publishing company. Lit. exp. and knowledge medical terms essen. Write giving detls. of educ., exp., age, sal. reqd. and stating whether prepared live out of London for first 2/3 months if necessary. Box A2339.

EXPERIENCED shorthand-typist, good at figures, required for general secretarial work. 40 hour week. Box A2343.

LIBRARY assistant reqd. by Research Association, S.W. London, female, exp., about 25–35, salary approx. £260, including war bonus. Apply Box A2357.

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LADY accustomed management of busy, extensive book department, desires charge progressive bookshop. Box A2349.

WOMAN, 20 years' wide experience (sec., administrative organising) wants responsible job. Box A2538.

GENTLEMAN seeks appointment, any literary capacity—as publisher's reader, secretary, librarian, research worker. Author of works of ref., biography, and history (musical and general). "P.J." Box No. 143, W. H. Smith & Son, 153 Western Rd., Brighton.

LADY (educated widow, 34), desires permanent responsible post in private or professional household, or small hotel, South Coast or near. Knowledge of secretarial work, and hotel routine domesticated, very reliable, where boy 4 welcomed, and if possible have company of another child. Box A2302.

YOUNG writer, specialist chamber and piano music, exp. journalism & commerce, seeks responsible position. Box A2531.

CONFIDENTIAL Sec. wide exp. desires int. respons. post with journalist, businessman, author, London area. Good appearance, education, widely read. Sal. £9. Box A2559.

YOUNG woman graduate, expert shorthand typist, good secretarial and statistical experience, seeks work 3-4 hours daily with left wing M.P. Moderate salary for interesting job. Apply Box A2560.

SECRETARY (shorthand typist), requires interesting post London. Box A2563.

SEC.-shorthand-typist several years' experience, good education, requires post 5-day week or part-time. Not Saturdays. Write "M," 35 Kenilworth Ave., Wimbledon.

W.R.N.S. Officer, experienced secretary, shthd.-typist, young, would like interesting whole part-time post connected with books, theatre, films. Box A2499.

YOUNG man, Oxford degree, now in business, would like try hand at spare-time lit. commissions of any kind where ideas welc. Slight exp. of advert. copywriting, but wider scope pref. Suggestions. Box A2492.

AUTHOR (8 books sold but not yet financially estabd.) seeks part-time live-in job—tutor, sec., steward, chauffeur, etc., while writing "epic." Would consider collaboration, perhaps autobiography play. Box A2485.

COMMON law solicitor, A.R.C.O., 35, married, 2 chldrn. Engaged in legal office seeks employment of greater service to commun. Southern counties pref. Box A2423.

THE

Political Quarterly

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The JANUARY Number will be wholly devoted to a consideration of THE POSITION OF GREAT BRITAIN IN THE POST-WAR WORLD.

Contributors will include R. H. S. CROSSMAN, M.P., KINGSLEY MARTIN, HUGH GAITSKELL, M.P., AYLMER VALLANCE, NOEL NEWSOME, DR. BOWLBY, LEONARD WOOLF, &c.

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Appointments—continued

SECRETARY wants evening wk.-end work, not necessarily secretarial. Box A2457.

NAVAL officer, Scot (30), graduate Econs., 4 yrs. exp. steel trade; healthy, good appearance, well informed current affairs; seeks opening for energy and determination in progressive sphere. Box A2458.

YOUNG lady, good secretarial exp., French, German, literary, artistic, prog. int. in design in general, seeks int. post London. Free shortly. Box A2421.

SOLICITOR, successful but Socialist, just demobbed R.A.F., detesting clients and all their work, would welcome any socially constructive work, home/abroad. Salary to support wife and 2 babies. Youngish, knowledge and understanding of politics and econs., lit., organising exp., good speaker. Box A2417.

EXPD. woman producer desires work with prog. company, amateur or prof., or with Dramatic School; London near. Box A2482.

LADY requires post as housekeeper where infant welcome. Box A2477.

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ROOM, unfurn., wanted Jan. at Belsize Park/Chalk Farm. Gentleman. Box A2265.

WANTED by ex-serviceman and wife furn. 1-2 rooms with use of kitchen and bath. Box 47, Smith's, 169 Finchley Road, N.W.3.

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ACCOM. urgently reqd. by R.A.F. officer and wife in London area, s.c. unfurn. flat pref. 'Phone essential. Box A2447.

LADY urgently needs unfurnished room, flat, or part house St. John's Wood or Regent's Park preferred. Box A2391.

WANTED urgently, bed-sit.-rm. or flat, use k. & b. Reas. distance Aldwych, for social worker. Tel. GIP 4310.

YOUNG architect searching for furnished room London area. Out dng. day, studies in spare time. Box A2572.

YOUNG research scientist requires bed-sitting room with electric or gas fire. Pref. Bloomsbury, Finsbury Park, Wood Green, Barnet, Potters Bar dist. Box A2538.

OFFICER'S wife with year old girl seeks share of house with other similarly placed. Can provide some furniture. South London, Kent, Surrey. Box A2542.

DISABLED ex-officer seeks modest home; or would share flat, cott., caravan. Box A2407.

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SCHOOLMISTRESS wants unfurnished flatlet or unfurnished accommodation, easy access Cheam. Box A2386.

HERTFORD, in or very near. Single gentleman wants furnished bedroom and large sitting room in quiet house, with breakfast, dinner and garage. Box A2535.